

4-22-2021

Dungeons & Drafting: Using Trpgs in the First-Year Composition Classroom

Anyssa J. Gonzalez
Nova Southeastern University

Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hcas_etd_all



Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Share Feedback About This Item

NSUWorks Citation

Anyssa J. Gonzalez. 2021. *Dungeons & Drafting: Using Trpgs in the First-Year Composition Classroom*. Master's thesis. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from NSUWorks, . (65)
https://nsuworks.nova.edu/hcas_etd_all/65.

This Thesis is brought to you by the HCAS Student Theses and Dissertations at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in All HCAS Student Capstones, Theses, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

Thesis of Anyssa J. Gonzalez

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Nova Southeastern University
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

April 2021

Approved:
Thesis Committee

Thesis Advisor: Melissa Bianchi, Ph.D.

Thesis Reader: Eric Mason, Ph.D.

Program Reviewer: Juliette Kitchens, Ph.D.

DUNGEONS & DRAFTING: USING TRPGS IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media

Anyssa Janelle Gonzalez

Halmos College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Communication, Media, and the Arts

Nova Southeastern University

May 2021

© 2021 by Anyssa Janelle Gonzalez

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Roleplaying games (RPGs) are powerful tools that encourage players to form and alter identities (Bowman, 2010; Gee, 2003; Johnson, 2012), compose texts for the gaming community (Alexander, 2009; Colby & Colby, 2008), and evaluate texts in innovative ways (Glazer, 2015; Ostenson, 2013). However, there is research missing in the way of practical applications of RPGs in first-year composition (FYC) classrooms. This thesis presents a six-week tabletop roleplaying game (TRPG) module called *Under Shady Terms*, which uses the mechanics of *Dungeons & Dragons (D&D)*, fifth edition. My design of the TRPG takes into consideration composition scholarship on writing identities (Johnson, 2012), multimodality (Shipka, 2014), assessment (Faigley et al., 1985; Shipka, 2009), and collaborative learning (Bruffee, 1989; Trimbur, 1989). The game module is paired with multimodal assignments designed to meet the outcomes of a FYC course. The campaign module uses the affordances of TRPGs to teach students the rhetorical skills they will need to participate in discourse communities (Mathieu, 2014; Weisser, 2002; Yancey, 2004). The module is also written to support instructors whose experiences with TRPGs are limited, providing resources and guidance for implementing the campaign in their courses. Ultimately, this thesis offers instructors a foundation for incorporating TRPGs in the FYC classroom and empowers instructors to develop their own campaigns.

Keywords: Roleplaying Games, RPG, Tabletop Roleplaying Games, TRPG, Composition, First-Year Composition, FYC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been completed without the support of my advisor, Dr. Melissa Bianchi, and reader, Dr. Eric Mason. Thank you for joining me on this journey and believing that I could do it, even when I did not think that I could. Dr. B, your guidance has been invaluable; you have always pushed me in the direction I needed to go by asking all the right questions. Had it not been for our Digital Games course, this thesis would not exist! For the past few years, you have helped me grow as a writer and researcher, letting my passion drive me by simply lighting the path. A million thank yous would not convey my gratitude. Dr. Mason, thank you for your insight and enthusiasm on my project. Your experience and keen eye made this campaign something to be proud of. How lucky I must be to have two incredible mentors whose passions aligned with mine, allowing me to do this work.

To the Bagel Bunch (the Punishers of Snakes, the Not Havers of Chairs nor Problems, the Embracers of Water) and the Nyock Out Crew: your help in realizing this campaign cannot be overlooked. Thank you for helping me come to terms with a messy idea and make it readable and playable. It would not be what it is without your help.

To Merly: thank you for listening to my ideas and keeping me on track. Our weekly writing sessions helped push me through to the end, and I appreciate the unique perspective you always brought to the table despite never having played a game of *D&D* in your life. *Under Shady Terms* would not be what it is without you, since you helped me name it!

To my family: thank you for believing in me always.

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Methods.....	11
Project Goals.....	11
Templates and Tools.....	12
Assignments and Assessment.....	14
Discussion.....	17
Findings.....	17
Recommendations.....	17
Conclusion.....	19
Appendix A: Campaign Module.....	20
Appendix B: Assignment Sheets.....	88
References.....	94

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Dungeons & Dragons Alignment Chart	7
---	---

Introduction

I played *Dungeons & Dragons* (Gygax, 1974) for the first time in 2016, right after completing my bachelor's degree and beginning my career as a teacher. Previously, I had shunned the game as being too “nerdy.” Despite my concerns, I was finally convinced to play by my friend and Game Master, Sam. My first character was a half-elf paladin named Caelynn whose bare-bones backstory was inspired by a recent rereading of *The Alchemist*. Pretty soon, the effects of the game permeated into my professional life. I was convinced to run a *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D) club after school with some of my 9th grade students. Though I did not know it then, it was a clear turning point for me that would eventually lead me to study tabletop roleplaying games (TRPGs).

D&D and other TRPGs are cultural touchstones that are often represented in podcasts, web shows, TV shows, and movies. Their influence extends well beyond the stereotypical scenario of nerdy kids playing in basements during the 70s. My students found a home in our weekly game sessions, as I did when I started playing in 2016. When playing a TRPG such as *D&D*, players collaboratively explore an imaginary world by roleplaying as fictional characters they create. They also perform a variety of actions which often requires them to roll dice to determine their outcomes. Players will often work together in TRPGs to explore, fulfill quests, and engage in combat against a common enemy. These engagements with TRPGs can foster community building amongst players. This community atmosphere results in the creation of distinct subcultures with unique languages, rituals, and artifacts, connecting the people who play them across the boundaries of age, gender, ethnicity, gender identity, and geographical location (Mäyrä, 2008). Players engage in game-related discourse on forums and social media sites, sharing experiences, guides, advice, and art that bring them together in their interests.

Game scholars and educators continuously encounter obstacles in legitimizing gaming in the classroom, a practice that is regularly dismissed as frivolous and dangerous. However, the field of game studies is growing in size and legitimacy as more research advocates for game-based pedagogy. Scholars claim that through active gameplay and collaboration with their peers, students experience firsthand the effects of their rhetorical moves and can apply those findings in the coursework (Bruffee, 1984; Colby & Colby, 2008). Additionally, students are afforded opportunities to experiment with new identities in gameplay and use what they learn in other writing contexts as well (Alexander, 2009).

This thesis is a ready-to-play classroom TRPG with a game guide, assignments, and resources to help FYC instructors integrate this module into their courses. The campaign, *Under Shady Terms*, was built using various resources from the *D&D* community, combining the conventions of *D&D* game modules with the needs of instructors. The objectives of the project are modified versions of outcomes for a first-semester general education course at Nova Southeastern University:

- Students will be able to write recursively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students will be able to apply appropriate rhetorical conventions in multiple media.
- Students will be able to craft effective arguments.
- Students will be able to conduct and synthesize research.
- Students will be able to produce critical reflections on one's writing and research processes.

Beyond my familiarity with these outcomes, I chose to build on them because they exemplify the core values of my teaching philosophy (giving students authorship opportunities in

a variety of genres and modalities) and were curated by an accredited university. Additionally, the outcomes of this course align with the affordances of TRPGs due to the recursive nature of both as well as the need for students to practice adapting to various writing contexts. With this project, I hope to inspire FYC instructors to become more intentionally playful through the implementation of the *D&D* module within their courses.

Literature Review

Though the applicability of games and play in education is often questioned, play is interwoven with all aspects of life, including learning. From childhood, we play “house” and use games as a form of practice for life skills (Henricks, 2014; Huizinga, 1949). Similar to these formative roleplaying experiences, FYC serves as an introduction to academia that can provide students with practice for their future studies. Given this parallel, games are, and should continue to be, a staple in the FYC classroom. The use of games in the classroom can turn the learning environment into a place where failure is another chance to learn (Gee, 2003). Like FYC classes, tabletop roleplaying games are spaces that can foster multiliteracies and experimentation with identity (Alexander, 2009; Gee, 2003). Whether educators use games, like Kahoot, to assess knowledge acquisition or have students analyze the rhetorics of videogames (Ostensen, 2013), the application of games in academic contexts has significant educational value for FYC that requires further study.

In general, games are vehicles for rich learning experiences because they are often fundamentally didactic. In the ideal classroom, students learn content, apply the knowledge, receive feedback, and make changes for future assignments. Many games function similarly; if a player fights a monster and dies, the game does not typically end. Instead, players are brought back to the most recent checkpoint, given a second (or third, or fourth) chance to win using their

newfound knowledge (Gee, 2003). Games show students that failure is not the finish line, and FYC teaches students that the writing process is dynamic. Writers often compose in a non-linear fashion as they discover new information through their writing, often drafting one text several times to achieve the desired effect (Murray, 1972). Capitalizing upon these similarities between games and composition may prove successful in teaching students about writing (Alexander, 2009; Colby & Colby, 2008; Glazer, 2015; Ostenson, 2013). In *Under Shady Terms*, the game space is designed to support experimentation with rhetorical techniques so that students may learn and apply in-game findings to their assignments. The experiences they have while playing can directly inform the way they approach out-of-game work that they do. Throughout this game module, students will encounter different types of characters with varying perspectives on the world that they will have to respond to appropriately based on the context. *Under Shady Terms* simulates those real-time decision-making skills and the course encourages them to reflect upon them to transfer that knowledge from the game to other areas of their lives.

Both games and composition courses engage students in designed experiences where they must actively construct discourse. Many composition classrooms encourage students to form their own conclusions through the creation of texts throughout the course. Constructionism theorizes that students learn by experiencing rather than having the knowledge imparted upon them by an instructor (Papert & Harel, 1991) without fear of repercussions (Gee, 2003). As a result, the classroom environment shifts from instructor- to student-centered learning. TRPGs are uniquely suited for students to construct their own knowledge because while students may be directed slightly, the burden to take the information they are given and apply it falls mostly to them. In *Under Shady Terms*, students conduct research on how to deal with the ghosts plaguing the denizens of Eresboro and must apply their knowledge to handle the final encounter. This

game module and its corresponding assignments allow them to speculate and hypothesize, ultimately using the information they have gathered across the course to reach the conclusion of the game.

TRPGs also offer instructors a unique evaluation tool to assess students in an innovative manner. While traditional assessment should still occur through coursework, there is a lot that can be evaluated in these intimate game scenarios, especially regarding communication, that cannot be wholly assessed through traditional writing assignments. In the game space, instructors can learn just as much from students as students learn from them because all involved share responsibility in the creation of the narrative. Collaborative learning can occur in this environment because everyone's voice is heard and respected (Bruffee, 1984; Weisser, 2002). The shift to student-centered learning, as described above, also means that instructors can provide more meaningful feedback as students take the lead in the classroom, all while students receive hands-on learning.

Roleplaying games are uniquely suited for the classroom because of their collaborative nature. *Dungeons & Dragons* hinges upon the teamwork of all players; while there may be some encounters a player can complete in solitude, the dragon cannot be slayed by one player. Composition theorists such as Kenneth Bruffee (1984) believe that conversations among students can help them reach conclusions they may not reach independently. The encounters in *Under Shady Terms* are designed to encourage collaboration towards a common goal. For example, to successfully remove the ghosts plaguing the denizens of Bindston, the adventuring party must work together and use their collective skill set. The instructor, as Game Master (GM), facilitates the exchanges and encounters, "encouraging the kinds of conversation valued by college teachers," (Bruffee, 1984) while empowering students to lead the discussions. Each character has

their own strengths and weaknesses, and understanding the dynamics of the group is vital for success just as it is for social and professional contexts.

One of the most compelling reasons to use TRPGs in the FYC classroom is that both roleplay and composition focus heavily on the formation of identity. The premise of role-playing games (RPGs) is to take on the identity of another person, viewing the game through their particular perspective (Hammer et al., 2019). As writers, we form new identities that vary slightly from our day-to-day personas. RPGs can serve as an experimental space for students to practice creating new voices and thinking critically about how various external elements such as audience, purpose, and medium can affect the way we present ourselves as writers (Johnson, 2012). While playing RPGs, students observe the convergence of three identities: the real-world identity, the virtual identity, and the projective identity (Gee, 2003). The three unintentionally influence each other; sometimes the real-world identity is the one that takes over in a moment of crisis in-game, or we can become disappointed if we do not fulfill the desires of our virtual identity (therefore endangering the projective identity). This externalization of identity is vital to success in academic spheres because awareness of their existence is key to using them (Johnson, 2012). In reflecting on the variations between each, students can use the knowledge gained to construct their writer identities and use them appropriately in their respective disciplines. In practicing these identities separately in the classroom and simultaneously in-game, students bring awareness to the assemblage of identity that influences their writing.

Table 1Dungeons & Dragons *Alignment Chart*

	Lawful	Neutral	Chaotic
Good	<p><i>Lawful Good</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a rule follower • Protects life • Is honorable and compassionate 	<p><i>Neutral Good</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does good without bias • Helps others but does not feel loyalty toward anyone 	<p><i>Chaotic Good</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not care for validation from others • Doesn't like being told what to do • Is kind but defies societal expectations • Is free spirited
Neutral	<p><i>Lawful Neutral</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses personal code • Capitalizes on law and order 	<p><i>True Neutral</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is sometimes illustrated as having no strong feelings one way or another • At other times, is shown as acknowledging dangers of polarity 	<p><i>Chaotic Neutral</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts unpredictably but not totally randomly • Avoids authority but does not disrupt intentionally
Evil	<p><i>Lawful Evil</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows a code that is evil in nature • May kill freely but with restrictions 	<p><i>Neutral Evil</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will do anything they can get away with • Disinterested in following law or code • Content with the in-between and lack of commitment to anything 	<p><i>Chaotic Evil</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will do anything to chase after their desires; is free spirited • Self-interested and disorganized • Engages in wanton destruction

TRPGs offer an additional layer of collaboration through the presentation and reconciliation of discordant moralities and identities. In *D&D*, each player chooses one of nine alignments (Table 1) that generally describe the actions and philosophies of their character. Throughout their adventures, students will encounter Non-Player Characters (NPCs), roleplayed by the GM. These NPCs' values may not align with those of the player characters (PCs), making way for conversations that push moral boundaries and question group consensus. Consequently, TRPGs become a contact zone where students experience diverse perspectives and make

decisions despite the tension a conflict may bring (Bizzell, 1994; Trimbur, 1989). Huizinga (1949) suggests that when people play, they step into a “magic circle” separate from the real world. The safety of the game space ensures students experience those negative consequences in-game where stakes are lowered, providing for positive trauma that can encourage growth rather than cause distress (Pierce, 2008). As a result, play makes space for reflection and re-evaluation by capitalizing on the safety of the classroom. While scholars have challenged the magic circle, claiming that the outside world does have influence over the game world (Consalvo, 2009; Copier, 2005), the idea of some separation between the game space and the real world still exists. Notably, Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman (2003) claim that play is both an open and closed system where game and real-world cultures can flow back and forth. This defining feature of games allows players to project their hopes and desires onto virtual identities, and the failures of their virtual identities may negatively affect their real-life identities (Gee, 2003). As suggested by Pierce (2008), the success of the contact zone is determined by the environment developed by the students and instructor. In this environment, all parties are held accountable to each other and constantly engage in reflection to ensure that the learning space remains safe. As a result, the contact zone of the TRPG-embedded in an FYC course can be a safe place to explore those dissonant moralities and address the flow of ideas in and out of the magic circle.

TRPGs access many concepts covered in composition coursework such as multimodality, multiliteracy, genre conventions, and process analysis. Roleplaying games are multimodal by nature, combining aural, textual, visual, and spatial components to create the gaming experience. As Jonathan Alexander (2009) notes, players often engage with multiple literacies in gaming communities through the creation of game guides, websites, and social media posts that connect people with similar interests. Similarly, Rebekah Shultz Colby and Richard Colby’s (2008)

proposed game-oriented writing course capitalizes upon this principle through the composition of texts for the gaming community. Students choose a type of text to create and publish, allowing them to see their work circulate instantaneously through blogs, forums, and other social media. Colby and Colby (2008) demonstrate how games might be integrated into coursework while organically supporting FYC outcomes. For each assignment in *Under Shady Terms*, students must select the mode that best fits the genre, audience, and purpose of the task. Delivering FYC through games and game-related texts allows students to see how the skills they learn in their writing courses have outside applicability to their interests and a wide variety of jobs.

Additionally, the “sandbox” feature of RPGs allows for endless solutions to each encounter. There is no one way to complete a writing task, and this realization legitimizes students’ desire to try new things and opens them up to new ways of thinking and creating (Shipka, 2014). *Under Shady Terms* explores some of the many ways players may react to the scenarios presented, but it is up to the players to choose their paths. Similarly, each assignment gives students the freedom to complete the task in myriad ways. The Process Logs become an opportunity for students to make the connections between genre, conventions, and rhetorical choices and defend the legitimacy of their work. This occurs similarly to the way that players must choose their solution to an in-game problem carefully to not trigger unintentional consequences.

Playing and writing simultaneously pushes students to actively consider the genre conventions of games and their in-class compositions. Like any writing genre, games have their own conventions that can be observed through play. James Paul Gee (2003) asserts that games are their own semiotic domains, a collection of multimodal signs that purport meaning for a community of people. Through play, students become familiar with the semiotic domain and

design grammar, taking note of the practices involved in the playing and creation of the game. Students can then transfer this attention to the conventions of the mediums and texts they use to compose pieces of writing that are deliberately conscious of themselves. The Process Log paired with each assignment for *Under Shady Terms* requires students to actively reflect on the choices they have made regarding these conventions, helping them understand the relationships between genre, audience, and purpose.

RPGs contain many instances of processes that help students to transfer that knowledge to the writing context. Ian Bogost (2007) illustrates how computer games teach players to use processes as well as bring attention to processes of a game's subject matter. For example, the open-world resource gathering and building simulator *Minecraft* teaches students to manage their materials. Alternatively, *Papers, Please* illuminates the dark workings of an immigration office in a fictional country as players choose who to allow and deny entrance. Through games, players learn the processes needed to meet the objectives in explicit and implicit ways. While composition teachers can impart considerable information to students regarding writing process, much of the learning comes from experiencing it firsthand (Papert & Harel, 1991). Through the assignments of this campaign module, students experience the writing process recursively and reflect on it so that they can implement this knowledge in other contexts.

It is important to note that while the field of games studies covers the entire game spectrum from videogames to TRPGs, the scholarship about specific game genres does not always overlap. There are many aspects of each genre that do not apply to others. Videogames are inflexible in that they are confined by their software, which limits how they can be shaped by players. Although the videogame experience has become exceptionally customizable and can be manipulated by users, they do not have the same level of malleability afforded by TRPGs. Every

aspect is within the control of the GM and the players, bound only by the agreements made between them and the rules they choose to enforce. The “rule of cool” often supersedes game rules and mechanics to reward players’ ingenuity. Additionally, as mentioned before, while videogames offer replayability and learning through checkpoints, TRPGs do not typically have the same feature. Instead, players are moving chronologically through a story and cannot affect their past decisions. Therefore, Gee’s (2003) commentary on how games are recursive does not directly apply to TRPGs.

However, many of the general insights concerning foundational aspects of games can apply to both. Even though TRPG players cannot go back and fight a boss continuously, players can still learn from the situations they encounter. Alternatively, TRPGs may mirror real life, serving the purpose of FYC in preparing students for future academic work and other writing contexts via simulation and hands-on experiences. Though TRPGs cannot be evaluated by their software like videogames often are, researchers may still assess their procedures (e.g., how game rules and mechanics operate).

Methods

Project Goals

The campaign is designed to be played alongside an FYC course because of how integral composition has become to the university experience as a foundation for future learning. First-year composition in the U.S., with its roots in helping college students whose writing skills did not meet expectations (Coxwell-Teague & Lunsford, 2014), is required for most university freshmen. However, as FYC shifts to meet the needs of university administrators, instructors turn their focus towards preparing students to enter their specialty with well-rounded writing skills and a grasp of multimodal composition (Shipka, 2014). Through first-year writing courses,

students are beginning to understand their place in the discourse and the feeling of uncertainty as they form unique writer identities (Johnson, 2012). This game module is a pilot for this process as students work through their discomfort within the confines of the game space. Through the game, students may experience uncertainty while embodying a character outside of themselves, even though the connection to the world is clear.

To ensure relatability for students, it was important for the narrative of *Under Shady Terms* to feel somewhat grounded in reality while incorporating the unique aspects of fantasy fiction. I struggled with this because of concerns that fantasy games such as *D&D* do not have real-world applicability. However, one of the most notable aspects of the game experience is the unavoidable simulation of real-world systems and analogies. Many of the social and political issues that we face can be represented in the play space (Bogost, 2007). I turned to the biggest problem plaguing our world at the time: the COVID-19 pandemic. Having begun just a couple months into my research and planning phase, the effects of the pandemic were so pervasive and exigent that it felt impossible to ignore, especially when *kairos* is a fundamental concept in writing curriculum. From here, the connections between the game and the assignments became clearer as they built upon each other.

Templates and Tools

Dungeons & Dragons, fifth edition (*D&D*), was the game system used to design the campaign because of its versatility with regards to modality, materials, and execution. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced teachers to become more flexible in accommodating blended learning models. This game module can be run in any modality—face-to-face, blended, or virtual—with minor adjustments to technologies implemented. Additionally, play sessions can be

used as workshops for students who are part of the active game group. However, adjustments should be made for instructors who may not have three class meetings per week.

D&D requires very few materials to begin, most of which are free to players. Instructors may need to make a small investment for some of the source materials (the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, etc.), but this module provides an instructor new to TRPGs with the foundational knowledge to run a game with their students. Appendix A contains a list of the resources I used to create the module. Additionally, the ever-helpful *D&D* community on Reddit is a wealth of knowledge for advice, pre-made materials, and more that should be a part of any GM or Instructor's repertoire.

Wizards of the Coast (WOTC), the company who owns *D&D*, welcomes GMs to write their own campaigns using the monsters, settings, magical items, and lore owned by the company. However, there are limitations listed in the Systems Reference Document (Wizards of the Coast, 2016) describing what can be published and where. For my thesis, I used the items covered by the Systems Reference Document (SRD) in addition to creating original elements, such as the Ethereal Egress. These choices ensured that I did not operate outside of Fair Use or copyright laws in publishing this project.

While formatting the document for the campaign, I took into consideration the conventions of *D&D* modules as well as the needs of composition instructors. There were many aspects that remained the same so instructors could go back and forth between documents and feel comfortable navigating both. As is standard in *D&D* campaigns, magic items and spells are italicized so instructors can direct themselves to the section with the appropriate information. Stat blocks for monsters and NPCs in *Under Shady Terms* resemble those of published *D&D* modules for consistency.

However, I did make some adjustments to increase readability and ease of implementation. Existing modules published by Wizards of the Coast do not acknowledge instructors as an audience. As a result, they lack key instructional considerations that could entice instructors to use them in educational settings. To tailor the campaign for instructors, I created text boxes that serve as sidenotes for instructors still learning to play the game. Additionally, these text boxes provide pedagogical considerations and tips for encouraging students to roleplay. The document also contains intertextual hyperlinks so instructors could navigate and reference information quickly.

Assignments and Assessment

The campaign module includes three major assignments: the Character History, Scholar Character Sheet, and Technical Text Assignments. Each assignment requires a different genre of writing with room for students to choose an appropriate mode for composition. Because FYC courses are one of the first academic experiences an undergraduate will have, the variety of genres allows students to explore each genre's affordances while learning to apply rhetorical conventions situationally. The assignment sheets in Appendix B include a brief overview, instructions, requirements, sample modes, corresponding course outcomes, and examples where appropriate. Instructors can adjust the campaign as needed to suit their students' needs. The assignments included in the game are focused on production rather than analyses of text, which makes the TRPG productive for facilitating learning since players have a strong authorship role in the game. This campaign varies from some of the other existing resources that use *D&D* to teach skills (Glazer, 2015; Roman & Wells, 2019) by using source material and understanding character motivations.

The first assignment of the module is a narrative composition that takes the form of the Character History. In this task, students create a backstory for their TRPG characters and this assignment. Students have the option of using personal experiences and memories to build the foundation of their characters or devising their own narrative using the resources provided. Typically, FYC students begin the semester writing a personal narrative because it draws on their prior knowledge from high school and their interactions with literature (Yancey, 2014). The Character History task scaffolds this prior knowledge within a new writing context and encourages students to situate their characters in a fantasy setting, similar to how they will place themselves in their discourses. It is an authorship opportunity distinct from other games because GMs can use the Character Histories to shape the fictional world, furthering the role of students as collaborators in the composition process.

The Scholar Character Sheet assignment is a unique way for students to synthesize their newfound understanding of *D&D* as a semiotic domain in a discipline-driven way. Character sheets are integral to the game because they store information about a character's abilities, skills, history, and traits. For this assignment, students conduct research on a scholar in their field and build a character sheet for that researcher using several elements of the sheet to make arguments about their work in the field. This task introduces students to academic discourse and asks them to think critically about how they will represent their chosen academic through *D&D* conventions. In completing this task, students must apply their knowledge of the game as a semiotic domain as well as develop a level of expertise in their field. Additionally, students should synthesize information from various modalities while exploring the writing process further.

The final assignment of the module is the Technical Text assignment, which provides flexibility for students in terms of purpose and medium. Students will compose a technical text that demonstrates their understanding of *D&D*'s design grammar and language. In groups, students may choose to create a game guide, a campaign encounter, or other type of text with instructor approval. This culminating project allows them to experiment with various mediums and text types. The final draft could be published on the internet for the wider *D&D* community as well to encourage discourse within the community as demonstrated by Colby and Colby (2008).

Initially, I planned to create rubrics for each assignment to assess mastery. However, as the tasks transformed and became more flexible and multimodal, a rubric felt too difficult to encompass all the criteria. Instead, I decided to include explicit reflection through the composition of the Process Log. With each completed assignment, students reflect on the choices they made regarding content, audience, and modality while acknowledging the implicit rhetoric of the modality itself (Shipka, 2009; Yancey, 2014). After reading about several models of reflection assignments, I settled upon the terminology proposed by Faigley et al. (1985) of the process log to capitalize on the growth and development throughout the composition of each assignment. This is vital to the creation of student knowledge because students come to the knowledge themselves through the experience and reflection process rather than having the knowledge imparted onto them (Hammer et al., 2018; Papert & Harel, 1991). Moreover, it brings explicit attention to the procedures of writing as well as the game so students can make inferences throughout the course.

Discussion

Findings

The process of writing the campaign and its supporting texts was arduous because campaigns are complex narratives to write. More than simply a story, *D&D* campaign modules also include dynamic encounters, situations where players must address conflict and find solutions that may or may not have been predicted in advance. Especially because the module is written with instructors new to RPGs in mind, I provide various outcomes based on potential player decisions and give instructors guidance on how to handle unexpected player responses.

Much of the work went into constructing a narrative and then connecting it to composition assignments. However, I learned that beginning with assignments and developing the campaign events around them ensured connectivity to each element. It was also vital to be flexible and readjust as the narrative changed.

Prospective users of the campaign and its resources should see the potential of using this type of pedagogy in their classrooms. There is a need to engage students in innovative ways, and I believe that this game module is an effective way to touch upon many of the essential concepts of first-year composition. *Under Shady Terms* is a deep dive into the conventions of TRPGs and various genres of writing that encourages investigation into these modalities. Through the game, students experiment with their writing identities and learn to adapt to each context.

Recommendations

Instructors who use this module within their courses should know that they have complete control over how they use the module. *D&D* campaigns can and should be flexible to the needs of the players. Instructors should adjust the difficulty of the encounters and give players hints when necessary. Considering the educational context for the game's

implementation and its goal to foster student growth and learning, it is incredibly important that instructors scale encounters to address the specific learning needs and educational background of each student. This scaffolding is similar to the interventions instructors make in more traditional curriculum; however, they are presented differently through the use of narrative hints via roleplay or the fudging of game mechanics and numbers to help players succeed.

Appropriate marketing of this class may be necessary to ensure that students who may not be open to this type of learning are made aware of its unique premise. Due to the narrative's connection to COVID-19, a content warning should also be included in the overview of the course so that students who were negatively impacted are not further harmed by the content of the game module. Finally, students should have the opportunity to register for another course section if they feel they will not benefit from the structure of the class.

Implementing this kind of pedagogy may not be for everyone. Writing the campaign was a difficult task and creating additional resources may feel like too much prep for an instructor who may already have a sizeable workload. Due to the player-driven nature of the game, there is no way to accurately predict how players will react to encounters, so instructors will need to think on their feet and improvise when necessary. As stated in the campaign module, it is difficult to run large groups of players. It is recommended that each party is comprised of four to five students. This may not be possible for every classroom based on enrollment but can be adjusted to account for larger groups. Instructors should consider these two factors carefully before implementing the campaign in their classrooms.

Additionally, the design of the game is intended to have play weeks and instructional weeks. During play weeks, instructors might have students who were not playing on that day work asynchronously on the assignment at hand. Instructors would then be spending that time

running the game with active players. This may not appeal to some instructors and can be modified in many ways, such as having students observe players and reflect instead.

Conclusion

While this work has made progress towards providing students with composition practice through roleplay, there is still much to be done. To test the campaign's effectiveness, it should be used with undergraduates taking an FYC course. This research can shed light on the module's effectiveness in increasing student self-efficacy in writing contexts. Moreover, it will help other instructors to understand how to use this type of resource in the classroom and make positive adjustments for future iterations.

Additionally, the creation of more resources designed with the composition instructor in mind could help to ease the accessibility of this type of pedagogy. Videos and text resources could lessen instructor concerns over adopting such a radically new methodology. As needs are identified, a library of resources can be built and housed in a database for instructors who are using the module in their courses.

Finally, there is potential for a series of courses to integrate *D&D* modules such as this one. Many first-year composition programs require two courses; if *Under Shady Terms* proves to be effective and enjoyable, additional game modules could be devised for subsequent courses and perhaps even have applicability in other areas of study. I hope to continue doing research of this nature, potentially working with writers from Wizards of the Coast to collaborate on designing *D&D* content that has educational value.

Appendix A

Campaign Module

Under Shady Terms

A D&D homebrew campaign for first-year composition

by Anyssa Gonzalez

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
What is <i>D&D</i> ?.....	1
Why <i>D&D</i> ?.....	1
How does this fit into my classroom?	2
What is a student’s role in the game?	2
What is an instructor’s role in the game?	2
Content Warning.....	3
How to Run the Game.....	3
Key Terms.....	3
Roleplaying Non-Player Characters (NPCs)	8
Rewarding Roleplay Using Inspiration Die.....	8
Discouraging Metagaming	8
Roll the Dice: Determining Successes	9
Using the <i>Player’s Handbook</i>	10
Scaling Adventures	10
Leveling Up.....	10
Reading a Stat Block.....	11
Combat	11
A Matter of Time.....	13
Backstory	13
Session Summaries.....	14
Important NPCs.....	16
Locations	17
Session 0: The Adventure Begins	18
Session Summary	18
Resources Needed.....	18

Create a Character.....	18
Choose a Motivation.....	20
Choose a Background.....	20
Choose a Race and Class	20
Adding Depth to a Character.....	22
Mechanics.....	22
Session 1: Interview with a Drow.....	23
Session Highlights	23
Setting.....	23
Key NPCs	23
The Interview and the Trial.....	24
En Route to Bindston	27
Session 2: Bogeys in Bindston	29
Session Highlights	29
Setting.....	29
Key NPCs	29
The Bandit Encounter	29
Arrive to Bindston	31
Session 3: A Summoning	33
Session Highlights	33
Setting/Background	33
Key NPCs	33
Mercenary’s Day Off.....	33
Conniving Kobolds	33
Unfinished Business	35
A New Task.....	38
Session 4: Things Go Awry	40

Session Highlights	40
Setting.....	40
Key NPCs	40
Session 5: A Convincing Conclusion.....	45
Session Highlights	45
Setting.....	45
Key NPCs	45
Resources	47
Monster Stat Blocks	47
NPC Stat Blocks.....	51
Spells	55
Instructor Resources	60
Game Examples	60
Core Game Resources.....	60
Game Creation Guides.....	60
Character Examples and Management	61
Campaign Managers.....	61
Generators	62
Student Materials.....	63
Required	63
Recommended.....	63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Types of Dice Rolled in <i>D&D</i>	11
Figure 2: Example Stat Block.....	13
Figure 3: Combat Grid Showing 8 Surrounding Squares within Player's Melee Range.....	14

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Dungeons & Dragons Alignment Chart.....	6
Table 2: Difficulty Class Chart.....	8

Introduction

If you are reading this, welcome to the party! This is a homebrew campaign module designed to be played with the mechanics of Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), fifth edition. The mechanics and rules of gameplay are those devised by Wizards of the Coast; however, the narrative is of my own creation.

What is *D&D*?

D&D is a tabletop roleplaying game (TRPG) that focuses on players' imaginations and roleplay. Game Masters (GMs) are the narrators of the campaign, guiding players along their path. "Winning" and "losing" are not terms that have clear meanings in *D&D*. Instead, players play to the end of the story. Sometimes there is a satisfying conclusion where players defeat the villain, while other campaigns end with the characters losing to the main antagonist or even becoming villains themselves.

Why *D&D*?

Composition instructors who want to engage students in an active and novel way turn to games because of their appeal and effect on players. *D&D*'s open-world feel and roleplaying characteristics allow students to experiment in a safe environment where the repercussions of the game can be reflected upon and resolved in the community space.

By roleplaying as a game character who is not oneself, students explore the same facets of identity they might consider when writing in a specific discourse. The core principle of *D&D* and the composition classroom is similar: we step into roles and use the tools we have acquired to create identities to serve a specific purpose. The roles and repertoires of a writer will vary from discourse to discourse, so stepping into each role is like trying on a new identity. Students will practice this skill, and others, in-game as well as in the assignments created in tandem with the campaign.

Each of the major assignments delves into a different genre: narrative, research/argument, and technical writing. These assignments appear in the course in the order listed above and represent in-game milestones where students can practice their composition skills.

Integrating *D&D* into first-year composition courses offers students authorship opportunities that they may not have experienced before. This course is focused on the production of writing rather than analysis of other texts. In giving students hands-on experience in writing in various

contexts and genres, students will develop the confidence they need to write in their environments beyond the game.

How does this fit into my classroom?

This game is designed to be played in five one-hour play sessions with a Session 0 for character creation. It was written for a course with 15-20 students that meets three times weekly; however, with minor adjustments, this can work for other group sizes and meeting times as well.

The game is meant to be run in tandem with a first-year composition (FYC) course. Apart from Session 0 (character creation), play might be scheduled biweekly starting on week 3. Students can be split into approximately three groups of 5-6 students and each group is run independently from the others (meaning the choices made by one group should not affect the others). The instructor takes on the role of GM whose duties are described below.

When students do not play the game, instructors may assign asynchronous work on the major assignment at the time (e.g., group 1 plays Monday while groups 2 and 3 are in breakout rooms or working in discussion boards). On weeks with no game play, students should debrief as a class and instructors may use this time for content-driven learning.

What is a student's role in the game?

Students are responsible for creating a character with stats and a backstory, making decisions for the character with their personality and backstory in mind, and reflecting on the process throughout the course. Students are players in the world created in this campaign module.

What is an instructor's role in the game?

This game module was designed for the instructor to be the GM of each student group. This means that the instructor is available only to active playing students on any given day during play weeks. Instructors should adjust the campaign as needed to address the specific needs of their classroom.

This campaign guide will describe each session and provide information about running the game. GMs provide setting and non-player character (NPC) descriptions (characters not controlled by the players), embody the NPCs in roleplay with the player characters (PCs), and determine whether certain actions succeed or fail. Any disputes may be discussed by the players and GM, but all final decisions are ultimately made by the instructor.

Content Warning

This game module was written at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its events are inspired by the global crisis because of its undeniable universal impacts. Due to the nature of the course, students may feel uncomfortable participating if they were significantly affected by COVID-19 through loss of a loved one, financial hardship, or other circumstances. Before allowing students to start on this journey, provide an opportunity for those who may have experienced these hardships to make alternate arrangements, whether it be participating in another way or signing up for another course section.

How to Run the Game

Key Terms

Those unfamiliar with roleplaying games may find some of the language in the following sections to be overwhelming. Reference the following key terms and definitions when necessary.

Ability Checks: To determine the success of an action (e.g., scaling a building, spotting danger from afar), roll a twenty-sided die (commonly known as a d20) and add the [modifier](#) for the skill in question. If the roll is equal to or greater than the [Difficulty Class \(DC\)](#) of the check, they succeed.

Adventuring Party: The group of characters formed by the players of the game (also known as a party). The GM is not considered part of the adventuring party.

Alignment: In *D&D*, players choose one of nine alignments that act as a rough sketch of each character's moral decision making. See the table below for more information.

Table 1

Dungeons & Dragons *Alignment Chart*

	Lawful	Neutral	Chaotic
Good	<i>Lawful Good</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is a rule follower• Protects life• Honorable and compassionate	<i>Neutral Good</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does good without bias• Helps others but does not feel loyalty toward anyone	<i>Chaotic Good</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not care for validation from others• Doesn't like being told what to do• Is kind but defies societal expectations• Free spirited
Neutral	<i>Lawful Neutral</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses personal code• Capitalizes on law and order	<i>True Neutral</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes illustrated as having no strong feelings one way or another• At other time, shown as acknowledging dangers of polarity	<i>Chaotic Neutral</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A free spirit who acts unpredictably but not totally randomly• Avoids authority but does not disrupt intentionally
Evil	<i>Lawful Evil</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows a code that is evil in nature• May kill freely but with restrictions	<i>Neutral Evil</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will do anything they can get away with• Disinterested in following law or code• Content with the in-between and lack of commitment to anything	<i>Chaotic Evil</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A free spirit who will do anything to chase after their desires• Self-interested and disorganized• Engages in wanton destruction

Armor Class (AC): Refers to the strength of a character's armor. The higher the number, the more armor the character has protecting themselves.

Attack Rolls: When a character wants to attack another, the attacking character rolls a d20 to determine the success of the hit. If the attacking character rolls lower than the [Armor Class \(AC\)](#) of the attacked, the attack misses. If the roll is equal to or above the AC, the attacked character is hit.

Campaign: The adventure presented in its entirety. This guide is a campaign, only telling one particular story experienced by its players. Wizards of the Coast (the company who publishes *D&D* adventures) has released many campaign modules, and GMs have devised their own

homebrew campaigns as well. What makes it *D&D* is the use of the game system, monsters, lore, and other elements that are unique to and/or copyrighted by Wizards of the Coast.

Canon: The official, accepted events of a campaign by all players and the GM.

Class: The skill set provided by a character's background. For instances, rogues are excellent at stealth while wizards tend to be well-read. Reference the *Player's Handbook* for the full list of available classes.

Combat: The period during which players fight hostile creatures or NPCs.

Concentration: Certain spells require concentration to have continued use. A player who has cast a spell requiring concentration cannot cast another spell that requires concentration. When a player takes damage, they make a Constitution [saving throw](#) to determine whether the spell is still in effect. The [Difficulty Class \(DC\)](#) is 10 or half the damage taken, whichever is greater.

Critical Failure: When a player rolls a natural 1 (the number on the die, not including modifiers), it is an automatic failure on the roll. Oftentimes, these rolls have negative consequences in the game.

Critical Hit: When a player rolls a natural 20 (the number on the die, not including modifiers), it is an automatic success. With reference to attack rolls, a critical hit will deal double damage. It is up to the discretion of the GM whether the player doubles the dice rolled OR doubles the damage on the original number of dice.

Death Saving Throws: When a character falls unconscious, they are not gone! Each turn on which they start with zero hit points, players make a death saving throw on their turn with a DC of 10. Upon three successes, the player is stabilized and unconscious with 1 hit point. Upon three failures, the player cannot be revived without magical means. Rolling a natural 1 will result in two failures whereas rolling a natural 20 will revive the character and bring their HP to 1.

Difficulty Class (DC): Difficulty Class is the number that determines the success of a roll. For instance, if a character is trying to scale a wall, the GM will decide upon a DC for the Athletics check. The player will roll the appropriate ability check using a d20 and add the ability [modifier](#) of the skill check. If they meet or exceed the DC, the roll passes. For an idea of how to choose a DC, note the table below.

Table 2

Difficulty Class (DC) Chart

DC	Difficulty
10	Easy
15	Medium
20	Hard
25	Very hard
30	Nearly impossible

Game Master (GM): The narrator of a given adventure. The GM is responsible for roleplaying all [Non-Player Characters \(NPCs\)](#), providing scene and character descriptions, resolving rule disputes, and promoting a safe environment for play. The GM facilitates and encourages players on their journey.

Hit Dice: Hit dice are used during short rests to recover health. The amount of hit dice available is equal to the character's level and the type of die rolled is determined by the class. Players may roll up to that amount of hit dice **until they have completed a [long rest](#)**. All hit dice become available for use again after taking a long rest.

Hit Points (HP): The amount of damage a character can take before falling unconscious.

Homebrew: A homebrew campaign uses the mechanics and lore of a particular game system (in this case, *Dungeons & Dragons*, fifth edition) but has an original storyline created by the author.

Initiative: Based on Dexterity, Initiative is how quickly a character reacts to the start of combat. Players roll a d20 and add their Initiative bonus (located on their character sheet).

Long Rest: To regain all hit points and abilities back, players must take a long rest of eight hours in-game. If players are camping and taking watch, players may complete two-hour long shifts of watch and still complete the full eight hours (i.e., Judah takes first watch for two hours, Hilbo takes second watch, Aelin takes third watch, and Squak takes fourth watch, totaling eight hours). Only one long rest can be completed during a 24-hour period in-game. Refer to the section titled [A Matter of Time](#) for more information on in-game versus real-world time.

Melee Range: The maximum distance a player can be from a foe to fight using a melee weapon. Melee range depends on the reach of a particular weapon (usually 5 feet), but some

weapons may offer additional range. See the [Fighting Up Close](#) section for more information about melee range and its application in combat.

Metagaming: The act of using game knowledge outside of what a particular character would know. For instance, if Brianna, a player, heard a conversation between two characters, but her character was not present for the conversation, it would be considered metagaming for her to use this knowledge. See the [Discouraging Metagaming](#) section below for more information.

Modifier: A number to be added or subtracted to dice rolls. For example, a character who has a -1 modifier to the Intelligence stat will roll -1 on rolls involving Intelligence. Modifiers can be affected by many factors such as proficiency/expertise, racial bonuses, and backgrounds.

Non-Player Character (NPC): Characters controlled by the Game Master (GM).

Passive Perception: Passive perception is a character's ability to spot something out of place without actively looking. This skill appears under "Senses" on a character sheet. GMs should note all players' passive perception DC.

Player Character (PC): A character controlled by a player.

Race (Culture): The term used by Wizards of the Coast to denote the history of a group of people. In *D&D*, race is a complicated concept that often mirrors the social issues of the real world (e.g., half-elves are often not considered elven enough or human enough by some in the same way people of mixed backgrounds may not be accepted by either culture).

Saving Throws: An ability check that will determine the outcome for selected spells and effects (such as death saving throws).

Session: A play session is the uninterrupted period of time during which play is occurring. If a group meets every Sunday for a month, they have conducted four play sessions.

Short Rest: A period of about an hour (real-world time) where players rest and regain some HP and abilities (this varies from class to class). Refer to [A Matter of Time](#) for more information.

Statistics (Stats): The set of numbers that determine a character's abilities. There are six stats: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Each ability falls under one of these stats and will utilize the modifier of that stat. Monsters and most NPCs will have a [stat block](#) that provides GMs with important ability and stat information.

Surprised (Surprise Round): NPCs or PCs may try to ambush a group of enemies. Players may roll a Stealth check against the Perception of the enemies to try and ambush them. Set the

DC at the appropriate level for the enemy type. Upon a success, the initiating party gets an extra round of combat before the other group is added to the initiative order.

Roleplaying Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

The GM's role is to embody each NPC. Only the GM knows the true intentions of any given NPC. In this guide, there are sidebars with information about each NPC and suggestions for personalities and information that the GM can provide PCs. Still, a good GM is open to what players offer and can improvise when necessary. Consider preparing a distinctive voice for each character that the adventuring party will encounter. If you do not know where to start, think of a real person or fictional character to help express what the NPC may sound like. You can adjust these characteristics as you see fit.

Rewarding Roleplay Using Inspiration Die

Roleplay can be incredibly daunting for someone who has never done it before. You can encourage players to participate by awarding them with an inspiration die for excellent roleplay.

An inspiration die is an extra d20 that can be used at that player's discretion for an ability check, attack roll, or saving throw. Generally, the die must be used before the end of the session, but instructors may adjust this practice as they see fit due to the short length of the sessions.

Discouraging Metagaming

Metagaming is the act of players discussing in-game information out-of-character or utilizing information that their characters would not know. Create a system with players to signal that out-of-character (OOC) conversation is occurring but encourage them to roleplay the discussions using only information their characters would know. For instance, if one PC witnessed an NPC being killed, even though the entire group was present in the classroom space, they are unaware unless that information was explicitly given to them by that PC.

Provide reminders to students of when they may be utilizing metaknowledge. If players begin to strategize combat during a round or use information their characters do not know, remind them that all information should be used in character.

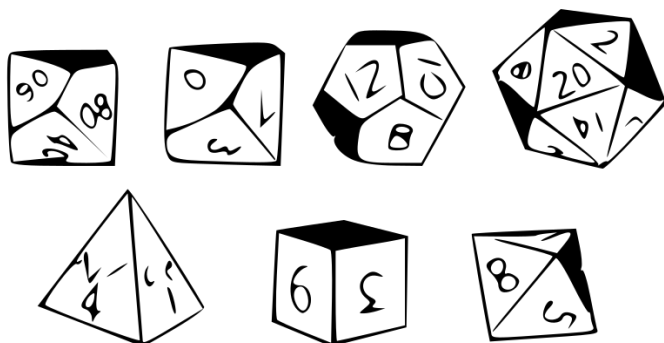
As a note, there are some important uses of metaknowledge! Especially when students are new to the game, these kinds of out-of-character conversations can help to build comfort within the new game system. Additionally, students are aware of their character's skills and should feel comfortable in acknowledging when their abilities should be used (i.e., if someone is checking

for traps, the character most skilled in this area might step up, knowing that they will likely perform well in this scenario).

Roll the Dice: Determining Successes

Figure 1

Types of Dice Rolled in D&D



Success and failure are determined by dice rolls. There are six types of dice used in *D&D* to varying degrees: d4, d8, d10, d12, d20, and d100 (the d100 is a percentile die shaped like the d10 but acts as the tens place for a d100 roll). The number after the “d” denotes the number of sides on the die. Players and GMs may choose to roll virtually (through *D&D Beyond* and other comparable mobile applications) or with physical dice.

Many rolls will be made with the d20. If a player wants to find a hidden door, DMs will ask for an Investigation check and players will roll a d20, adding the modifier for the Investigation ability noted on their sheet. For instance, if Enna the wizard has +6 to Investigation to find the hidden door and rolls a 12 on the d20, his total will be 18. The difficulty class (DC) of the check is predetermined. Many of the required checks are provided in the guide below, but there may be times where the GM may need to improvise a check based on what players would like to do.

Providing Players with Autonomy

In the ideal gameplay scenario, players tell the GM what their characters are doing and then the GM determines the appropriate roll for the task. For instance, if players are figuring out how to arrive at a destination, have them roll a Survival check. Depending on the level of success, it may take the group significantly less time to travel than anticipated due to a safer path being found. A failure might cause them to come across a monster they didn’t expect to fight. To determine which roll best suits the situation, consult the *Player’s Handbook* for guidance.

Fudging Rolls

There may be times where players face difficulties passing certain obstacles in game. For the course, students may benefit from instructors fudging rolls if players are in danger or if they are on the cusp of success. This may especially come in handy during the final fight against Hank. Make adjustments as necessary for students to get the desired impact from the game.

Using the Player's Handbook

Not all gameplay situations can possibly be covered by one guide, as each group of students is unique. If there are questions about how to resolve situations, do not worry—there is an answer for it somewhere! Instructors can browse through the *Player's Handbook* or even perform a search online for the answer. *D&D's* community is incredibly expansive, and although they may not have the exact answer, the existing resources can help instructors find resolutions.

One thing to remember in *D&D* is that **the GM has final say in all discussions of rules**. While there may be players who have experience and may assist in finding the answer, the decision ultimately lies in the GM's hands.

Scaling Adventures

Ideally, instructors will split students into three adventuring groups, allowing for a rotation of one play session and two workshops per week. Depending on the number of students and class meeting times, adjustments can be made.

The recommended party size is four to five students per adventuring group. Although this number can be adjusted, *D&D* is significantly harder to manage with larger groups.

Additionally, modifications to encounters will need to be made for larger parties. Each combat encounter in this module is optimized for five players. There are additional resources cited in the [Instructor Resource](#) section to help GMs balance encounters for party size.

Leveling Up

One of the most satisfying experiences in *D&D* is leveling up. This is a measure of growth that is important to learners and players alike. Each class receives new abilities and more hit points at each level. In this adventure, the players start at level 3 and will progress up to level 5 for the final battle against Hank. Players should level up as follows:

- After session 2 to level 4
- After session 3 to level 5

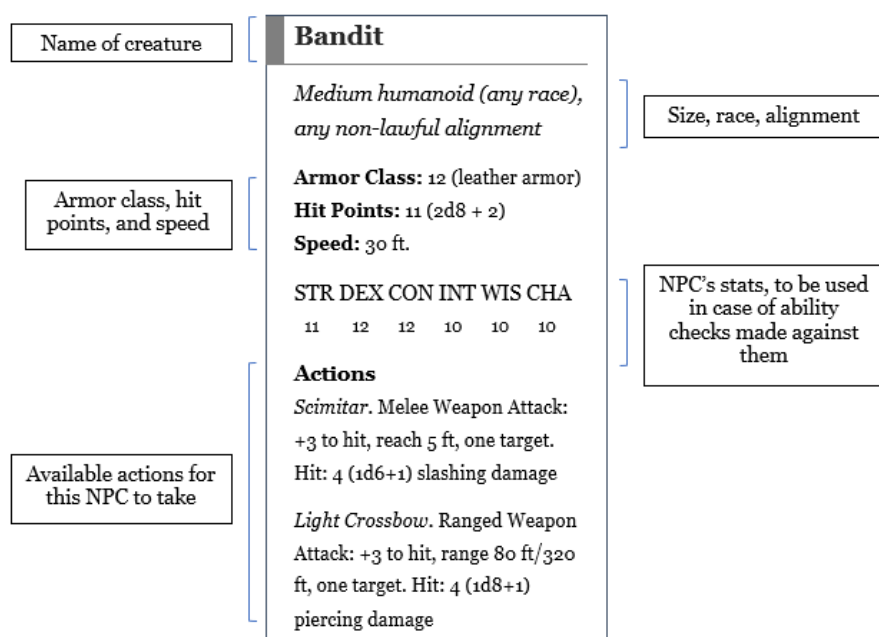
Depending on the class composition, instructors may build in time during the week following a level up for everyone to make changes to their characters as a class. This could be done in conjunction with debrief time to ensure that players understand and follow relevant mechanics.

Reading a Stat Block

A stat block provides vital details for NPCs. Stat blocks present information for combat and ability checks that may arise during gameplay.

Figure 2

Example Stat Block



Combat

Arguably, the most difficult component of *D&D* is running a combat encounter due to the level of organization needed by the GM to keep it moving swiftly.

Combat may be initiated in multiple ways. Players may initiate combat by attacking an NPC or monster physically or provoking them verbally. A hostile group of monsters or NPCs may initiate combat upon seeing the adventurers. Each player rolls [initiative](#), determining where in the turn order they will go. For instance, a group of five players may roll 21, 4, 16, 10, and 18. Combat begins with the highest roll (21) and continues in descending order. The GM also rolls initiative for each NPC and monster and then places them in the initiative order.

Combat happens in what are called rounds. Each round of combat takes place in a time span of six seconds. This means that all players' actions (NPCs and PCs) for the round will occur in this six-second period. To ensure smooth combat, ask players to plan their turn in advance.

Each player can do the following within ONE round (however, players may choose to only do some of the following things in a given turn):

- **Movement:** Move up to your character's speed (usually 30 feet).
- **Action:** Do something! Usually, the action is to Attack or Cast, but there are other actions listed in the Basic Rules document.
- **Bonus Action:** Some characters may have special abilities that fall under the bonus action.
- **Reaction:** Reactions usually do not happen on a particular player's turn but are triggered by other events. Some spells can be cast as reactions (and will say that in their descriptions) and some characters may have special features determined by their race or class. The most common reaction is an opportunity attack, described below in the [Fighting Up Close](#) section.
- **Free Action:** There are some actions that do not take up a full action or bonus action. Talking, performing a simple check (such as Insight or Perception), or switching weapons are all considered free actions.

Figure 3
 Combat Grid Showing 8
 Surrounding Squares within
 Player's Melee Range

	PLAYER	

Fighting Up Close (Melee Attacks)

Many weapons will have to be within melee range (5 feet) of a hostile creature to land the attack. While there are some weapons that may allow a range of 10 feet, 5 feet is the standard.

Combat takes place on maps that are made up of squares meant to represent the 5 feet of reach characters have. A player can attack any hostile that is within the 8 squares surrounding the one they are standing on. If a player is fighting someone and that person moves away from one of those eight surrounding squares, this triggers an opportunity attack (a type of reaction). See Figure 3.

Fighting from Afar (Ranged Attacks)

There are other weapons such as crossbows that allow characters to attack without being within melee range. These weapons will specify the range of their use and always have two numbers which will determine whether the attack is a straight roll or is rolled with disadvantage.

For example, a crossbow can be fired from up to 80 feet away from a hostile creature. If the player is not within that distance, they can roll with disadvantage up to 320 feet.

Many spellcasters can cast from a certain range. Each spell will specify the distance a PC must be to cast the spell.

A Matter of Time

Time is an important and sometimes complicated concept in *D&D* because time passes more quickly in-game than out-of-game. It is important to distinguish periods of time that pass in-game for players. Oftentimes, hours or even days are skipped for brevity, so it is important to understand how time impacts various elements of the game. Throughout the campaign, it will be noted whether the passage of time is **in-game or real time** to help distinguish those situations.

Handling Sessions

The sessions are designed to last about an hour of real time each. However, *D&D*'s unpredictable nature may lead for certain events to take longer than originally intended. The campaign was shortened to five sessions to ensure that students and instructors would have enough time to complete the events within the semester. Sessions may bleed over into another class period. Make the decision that works best for the class and its students.

Time During Combat

A round of combat takes place in 6 seconds. The actions of each character take place almost simultaneously, the order determined by their initiative rolls. This means that these battles may take a matter of minutes in game, but the real time process of going through each player's turn will be much lengthier.

Backstory

An illness known as the Mindless Malady is spreading across the region of Eresboro. It is like nothing healers across the region have ever seen before, and people are searching desperately for a solution.

The party finds an opportunity for work in Eresboro's largest city, Laureli, to help deal with the malady. They are hired by The Healer's Hand, a well-known organization that is looking for individuals to help determine and carry out a resolution for whatever is causing the malady. The Healer's Hand is run by Carine Dressali and her business partner, Hank Woodore. Hank kills Carine and begins to impersonate her using magic. Unbeknownst to the players, an extraplanar creature known as Kadruhis strikes a deal with Hank, promising wealth, knowledge, and power at the price of flesh for the fiend to feed on. In future dealings with the party, Hank enchants Shush, Carine's mentee, to fulfill his nefarious plot: to open a rift between the Ethereal and Material Planes so Kadruhis can consume even more souls. The adventurers must work to reveal Hank's betrayal of The Healer's Hand and keep more people from losing their lives.

Session Summaries

Session 0: The Adventure Begins

The instructor works with students to create their characters.

Session 1: Interview with a Drow

Adventurers interview with Carine and Hank for The Healer's Hand task, travel to Bindston, and encounter the bandits on the road.

For GM's Eyes Only: After this session, Hank kills Carine and begins to impersonate her using the spell "disguise self."

Week 4 Assignment Due: Character History

Session 2: Bogeys in Bindston

Adventurers meet Colt and receive a list of families who need help, then go to their homes to remove the ghosts possessing each ill person.

Session 3: A Summoning

Adventurers have a free day to either help the bandit group from Session 1 or help a ghost complete unfinished business. The party then meets with Carine (Hank in disguise) to receive their orders to head to Meknysdis with Shush.

For GM's Eyes Only: Hank is impersonating Carine at this meeting. He gives the PCs a magic item called Ethereal Egress that can open a rift between the Material and Ethereal Planes. However, PCs should be under the impression that this item will help

them protect Meknysdis's people. Before the party departs, Hank casts suggestion on Shush to ensure she uses the item.

Week 8 Assignment Due: Scholar Character Sheet

Session 4: Things Go Awry

Adventurers travel to Meknysdis with Shush to pilot the protective spell. Instead, they open a rift between the Material and Ethereal Plane using the *Ethereal Egress*. Deddart becomes suspicious of the group, arresting them for what seems to be ill will against her people.

For GM's Eyes Only: Shush is under the spell suggestion. She has been commanded by Hank to use the item despite knowing its true purpose. Once the task is complete, she is released from the suggestion spell, realizing what she has done.

Session 5: A Convincing Conclusion

Adventurers are taken to Laureli to explain to the Laureli High Council the events that have transpired. This is an opportunity for the PCs to advocate for themselves in the aftermath of the events and make sure they are not blamed for Hank's actions.

Week 14 Assignment Due: Technical Text

Important NPCs

Below is a brief description of the most named NPCs in the game. Throughout the campaign guide, look for boxes like these to give you additional information on how to run the characters.

Carine the Compassionate

Carine Dressali (cah-REEN dress-AH-lee) is a drow cleric whose life work has led up to what is now known as The Healer's Hand. She has a kind voice and she radiates compassion.

Carine stays steady in her philanthropy and values it above all else, including Hank's desires for knowledge, wealth, and power. When he approaches her to try and monetize the work for the malady, she refuses, so he murders her.

Hank Woodore

Hank Woodore is a human wizard who works for Carine. He is a bit abrasive and has a passion for his craft and the pursuit of knowledge.

Although his relationship with Carine has been pleasant in the past, his love for her has turned to disdain as their desires have diverged.

After the group's first meeting with The Healer's Hand leadership, he and Carine have a disagreement over the future of the organization, in which he kills her. Hank then meets Kadrughis, a nalfeshnee who promises to give him what he wishes for: knowledge, wealth, and power. This, of course, comes with a hefty cost that Hank is willing to pay. He provides the players with the *Ethereal Egress*, an artifact that will bring more ghosts to the plane to take more lives and feed Kadrughis, making a villain out of someone who was once a well-meaning man.

Shush

Shush is a dragonborn cleric that Carine took under her wing from a very young age. She has always been on the shy side. Hank takes advantage of Shush's relationship with Carine when he uses her to carry out his evil deeds.

Shush becomes a pawn that helps Hank to place blame upon the adventurers using the *suggestion* spell.

Locations

Below are brief descriptions of the locations the players will visit during the game.

Eresboro (EH-rez-bore-oh)	Eresboro is the name of the region where the campaign is set.
Laureli (lor-EL-ee)	Laureli is the diverse, prosperous centerpiece of the region of Eresboro where the players will start the campaign. The Healer's Hand is based out of this city.
Bindston (BINS-ton)	Bindston is a small village that has been severely impacted by the Mindless Malady.
Meknysdis (meh-NIS-dis)	Meknysdis is a mining town about half a day's travel from Bindston. The town needs to continue production to stay afloat, hence why they requested assistance from Laureli.

Session 0: The Adventure Begins

Session Summary

- Introduce students to the inciting event
- Help students to create characters with rich backstories

Read the following text to players:

It is a time of great sadness and peril in Eresboro. Across the region, hundreds of people are being infected by a never-before-seen illness nicknamed the Mindless Malady. The disease infects its victims with no warning, rendering them unresponsive to those around them. The people who have fallen prey to the malady have not recovered. Opportunities for work are scarce and fear is abundant, but you desperately seek a job to fulfill your needs and goals. A well-known organization known as The Healer's Hand has posted a listing for people with a broad skill set who are interested in helping those who have been affected by the illness. You will meet the leaders of The Healer's Hand in Laureli and attempt to secure the task.

Resources Needed

To create characters, students and instructors should utilize the following resources:

- *Player's Handbook*
- Wizards of the Coast's 5E Character Sheet **OR** *D&D Beyond*
- [Handbooker Helper videos](#) by Critical Role

Create a Character

Creating a character can be simultaneously exciting and intimidating. Some students may feel lost at the idea of having to think creatively. As with any type of writing, the process for creating a character is not always linear.

Each student should consider the following aspects of their character:

- Name
- Age
- Sex and gender identity
- Physical description
- Race
- Class
- Alignment
- Stats
- Background
- Language(s) spoken
- Personal history
- Motivation to work for The Healer's Hand

There are a variety of methods that students can utilize to create a character. Here are some suggestions:

Method 1	Method 2	Method 3
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pick a race and class combination that seems interesting to you. 2. Select a background from Chapter 4 of <i>the Player's Handbook</i> and roll for the characteristics* or create your own. 3. Use those rolls to help inspire a character history. 4. Create a fitting motivation for pursuing the task. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify a real-world or fictional person on which to base your character 2. Imagine what they might be like in a fantasy setting. 3. Choose a motivation and background that seems appropriate. 4. You may choose to roll for the characteristics or create your own. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a random background and roll for the characteristics/ choose your own. 2. Use the rolled characteristics to inspire a character history. 3. Create a fitting motivation for pursuing the task. 4. Choose a race and class that benefit from the character's skills and background.

*Each background includes tables with personality traits, flaws, bonds, and ideals relevant to that archetype of characters. Each table has a die assigned to it that players may roll to randomly select these elements.

Choose a Motivation

Each character must have a concrete reason for wanting to pursue the task with The Healer's Hand. If students are having trouble generating ideas, provide them with some of the following story hooks:

- You have a relative in Laureli that recommended you for the task.
- You had family members die of the malady, and you want to make a positive difference.
- You have always looked up to Carine and want to learn from her.
- Your livelihood has been severely disrupted by the malady, and you are desperate for work.

Choose a Background

There are five important components of a *D&D* character background: personality traits, bonds, flaws, motivation, and a story to combine them all. The *Player's Handbook* has created backgrounds (archetypes) that address various possibilities for a character's history and provide PCs with additional features and proficiencies. These backgrounds begin on page 124 of the *Player's Handbook*. Students should pick one of the backgrounds to add to their character sheet.

Encourage students to read through the backgrounds and select one that interests them. The instructor may allow students to devise custom backgrounds depending on comfort level.

Choose a Race and Class

Each player should pick a race and a class for their character. Instruct students to read through Chapter 1 of the *Player's Handbook* which gives detailed descriptions of each race. Some class and race combinations are better than others due to various stat bonuses provided by each (e.g., dragonborns make good barbarians because they have +2 strength and the main stat for barbarians is strength).

Adventuring groups should work together to choose a variety of classes to ensure that each party has a healthy composition of melee (up close) fighters, ranged fighters, and healers. Instructors should create groups first and then have them design their characters with the interests of the adventuring party in mind. Alternatively, instructors may allow students to design the characters they wish and group them afterwards.

Classes	Description
Barbarian	Melee fighters whose strength and rage fuels them
Bard	Spellcasters who typically fight from afar and support others in combat; bards use their Charisma for spellcasting
Cleric	Healing spellcasters who receive their magical energy from a divine source; clerics use their Wisdom for spellcasting
Druid	Spellcasters who can shapeshift into various creatures; druids use Wisdom for their spellcasting
Fighter	Warriors who are proficient in martial combat
Monk	Warriors whose power comes from the connection between their minds and their bodies.
Paladin	Holy warriors whose connection to their deity fuels their power; paladins use Charisma for spellcasting
Ranger	Fighters who are especially skilled in tracking and hunting
Rogue	Stealthy, often mischievous characters who tend to fight in close quarters
Sorcerer	Spellcasters whose power is passed through a gift or through familial bonds
Warlock	Spellcasters whose power comes from a deal with a higher being
Wizard	Spellcasters whose power is derived from knowledge and research

Races
Dragonborn
Dwarf
Elf
Gnome
Half-elf
Halfling
Human
Tiefling

Adding Depth to a Character

Students should be given some creative freedom to compose their characters' histories.

Although this campaign guide includes a few named cities and regions, encourage students to name the town, city, or village their characters come from and provide details to give others a deeper sense of their characters' lives before the campaign.

- Students may want to consider the following questions:
- Where is your character from? What is this place like (climate, culture, size, etc.)?
- Before heading to Laureli for the task with The Healer's Hand, what did your character maintain their livelihood?
- Who does your character live with?
- What friends does your character surround themselves with?
- Does your character have any secrets?
- Does your character have any connections to other PCs?

Mechanics

There are some mechanical things that must be done before playing, starting with setting the character's stats. There are six stats that cover all the skills utilized in the game: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma. Every two points above 10 equates to a +1 modifier (i.e., if a character has 16 in Intelligence, their intelligence modifier is a +3). The highest number a character can have in any stat is 20 (+5 modifier). Anything below a 10 is considered below average.

Although there are many ways in which players may determine their stats, the most common is the standard array. The standard array allows characters to remain mostly balanced. Players assign one of the following numbers to each stat: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8. Then, once each number is assigned, players should add the bonuses granted by their character's race/background.

Instructors should review the character sheets with students to confirm that they are completed correctly.

Session 1: Interview with a Drow

Session Highlights

Players will:

- Meet other party members in Laureli at The Zealous Mole
- Meet Mags, Carine, Hank, and Shush
- Complete the trial and interview
- Receive their first task
- Depart for Bindston

Setting

Players will arrive in the city of Laureli, the main hub of Eresboro. The listing for this task was posted in their respective towns and they were asked to come to The Zealous Mole, a local inn, by this date.

Key NPCs

- Carine Dressali
- Hank Woodore
- Mags
- Shush

Read the following text to players:

You arrive at The Zealous Mole by late afternoon with the sun nearing the horizon. The inn has a tavern on the bottom floor, with stairs leading up to the room splitting the bar into two sides. Laureli is a diverse city, and it shows in the company that are starting their evening here. You see a half-elf serving drinks behind the bar, a rag tag group of drinkers huddled around a table with cards flying off it, a quiet dwarf and halfling couple enjoying dinner quietly away from them, and an elderly gnome woman sits at a table positioned to the left of the entrance.

The tavern's seating area is split in half by rope, with the current patrons on the right and the mingling area for prospective hires on the left. The halfling woman, who could not care less about your presence begrudgingly sits up and calls out to you.

The Interview and the Trial

The halfling woman is Mags, who welcomes each party member and checks them in, giving them a piece of parchment and some ink for them to write their names. Mags tells the characters that they can grab a drink and some food while they wait for Hank, the interviewer.

Players should now be encouraged to chat amongst themselves, choosing an action to take such as sitting at the bar and ordering drink or food, chatting with another player, pressing Mags for information, or anything else they may think of.

NOTE: *Roleplaying can be very uncomfortable for new players, even those who tend to be outgoing. If you find that players are shy and have trouble beginning the conversation, bring [Caelynn](#) (KAY-lynn) into the scene to help promote conversation. She may ask characters some questions about their hometown, why they are here, etc. to get players chatting. Additionally, you may give them suggestions for actions they can take such as the ones listed in the previous paragraph, encouraging them to think as the character rather than themselves.*

After some time has passed and you have all introduced yourselves, Hank comes out to greet you. He is tall with tanned skin and dark, curly hair. His voice fills the room effortlessly as he announces:

“Welcome everyone! We are so excited to have some incredible individuals here looking to help The Healer’s Hand. The trials will test your ability to do various tasks. As you can see, there is another group of adventurers here who is also interested in the position! You’ll have to perform better in two of the three trials to show your worth. The trials will have three components: a research task, an interview, and a combat skill challenge.”

Students will take part in three separate tasks here: the research task, the interview, and the combat skill challenge. This will help to get them comfortable with rolling ability checks. They will compete against a group of NPCs who are also applying for the task. You can find the NPC stat blocks for Caelynn, Urok, Aero, and Felnor in the [NPC Stat Block](#) sections.

Research Task

Hank speaks directly to all the potential mercenaries, stating that the Mindless Malady is an illness that seems to be caused by something non-corporeal. Clerics are having a difficult time

pinpointing the exact reason for what is causing people to become sick. The infected are reportedly:

- unresponsive to family and friends
- unable to perform normal daily tasks
- seem to have an empty look behind their eyes

Players should roll a group Investigation check. Players may use spells such as *guidance* to enhance their rolls. Take the average of all the rolls and reference the table below for the outcome. Perform a roll for the opposing team as well.

<i>Researching Symptoms and Cause</i>	
Roll	The players find the answer within...
1-5	2 hours
6-10	90 minutes
11-15	1 hour
16-19	45 minutes
20+	30 minutes

Once they have determined that the malady is caused by ghosts possessing the bodies of the infected, players will now be tasked with finding solutions for this problem. There will be an out-of-game component for this research. Give students 15 minutes (real time) to use any of the sources at their disposal to find ways to rid ghosts from the bodies they possess.

Some potential sources for research:

- Google
- Reddit’s *D&D* community
- *Player’s Handbook*

Potential solutions for removing ghosts from people:

- Bring the NPC’s body to 0 HP and heal them afterwards
- Convince the spirit to leave using persuasive techniques
- Use [*command*](#)
- [*Protection from evil and good*](#) spell
- [*Magic circle*](#) spell
- [*Dispel evil and good*](#) spell
- [*Hallow*](#) spell

<i>Researching Solutions</i>	
Roll	The players find x solutions...
Natural 1	None
2-8	1
9-14	2
15-19	3
20+	All solutions they came up with

NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of solutions. Players may come up with unique solutions for how to remove the ghosts. After players have announced their potential solutions, have them conduct research to decide whether those are viable options.

Additionally, instructors may choose to create “field reports” that students can sift through to find this information. In doing this, instructors can control what students access (if they use the internet, they may not find what they need or may find too much information that takes away from the experience of the game) and still allow them the chance to showcase their ability to synthesize information across multiple sources.

Depending on the creativity and effectiveness of their outside research, provide students with a boon to help them conduct this research in game. Players should roll a DC 17 Investigation check.

The boon could be advantage on the roll, +5 to their roll, etc. Choose a bonus that feels appropriate based on the quality of their research.

Interview

After the research task is complete, Hank will announce that they are moving on to the interview portion where they will discuss the outcome of their research. He calls in the NPC groups first followed by the players. The interview is initially run by Hank, but as the conversation progresses, Carine interrupts and steps in as well, seemingly interested in the group and their insights.

NOTE: Because of Hank’s intense passion for knowledge, instructors may roleplay him as being interested in the information being shared.

Suggested Questions for Interview:

- Where are you from?
- Why do you want to work for The Healer’s Hand?
- Why do you all believe that you make a good team?
- Tell me about a time where you did something you felt was necessary even though it may not be considered “right.”

NOTE: Feel free to add and delete questions based on the modifications made to Assignment 1. This is merely a suggested list. Students should have all the answers to these questions prepared in advance to aid them in roleplay.

- What were your findings from the research task?

Combat Skill Challenge

Once the interview portion is complete, the party's combat skills will be put to the test. Hank casts *conjure minor elementals* to summon two [ice mephits](#) and two [magma mephits](#). The adventuring groups will fight one of each type. The team who defeats their creatures first is deemed the victor.

Outcome	Encounter
1	1d6 giant wolf spiders
2	1d6 black bears
3	1d4 quasits
4	1 bronze dragon wyrmling

After all tasks are completed, Carine will leave the room with Hank momentarily to discuss the results. During this time, the group is left with Shush.

Shush talks to them briefly about her time with Carine and how she has appreciated working at The Healer's Hand.

After some time, Carine and Hank return and give them the good news that they are hired along with several pieces of information:

- The group will be heading to Bindston to help several people suspected to have the malady
- They will meet with Colt at the town's infirmary to receive the list of families needing assistance
- Carine and Hank will arrive in Bindston a day or two after the group arrives and will give them the next task; there are some loose ends to tie up in Laureli
- The group are given medallions with the symbol of The Healer's Hand (two clasped hands with an angelic halo floating above them) so people can identify them

Roleplaying Shush

Shush is a dragonborn that has been with Carine since she was very young. Shush looks up to Carine and speaks very highly of her.

She tends to be on the shy side, but gushes when she talks about Carine. She tells the group of the positive effect Carine has had on her life and the lives of others through her work with The Healer's Hand.

En Route to Bindston

Players depart to Bindston in a cart provided by The Healer's Hand. Ask players where they will be during this time (driving the cart, sitting alongside the driver, in the back of the cart, walking alongside the cart, etc.).

The journey is about two days. The group will need to make camp in the evening to take a [long rest](#) and then finish their travel the following day. Roll a d4 to determine what encounter the players will experience. Complete the encounter at some point during the first evening.

Taking Watch

To avoid any unsavory creatures on the path to Bindston, players will need to take turns on watch. Long rests must occur in an eight-hour period. Players can take turns completing two-hour shifts and still receive the benefits of a full night's rest.

During a long rest, have players roll a DC 14 Perception check. If they roll above a 14, they notice that one of the encounters from the encounter table above is about to occur and are not taken by [surprise](#).

Session 2: Bogeys in Bindston

Session Highlights

Players will:

- Conduct the bandit encounter
- Arrive to Bindston
- Meet Irdianas Vorroth
- Head to the local infirmary and meet with Colt
- Receive the list of families to help around Bindston
- Help families on the list

Setting

Players start this session on the road to Bindston where they encounter the bandits. Players will arrive in Bindston, a small town that is suffering from the Mindless Malady. Below, a detailed description is provided to read to players.

Key NPCs

- The bandits: Zachariah, Yesona (yes-OH-nah), Rivoril (river-ill), and Fridmare (frid-mare)
- Colt
- Irdianas Vorroth (ear-DEE-ah-nas VORE-oth)

The Bandit Encounter

After the players have successfully completed a long rest, they have all their hit points and abilities restored. They continue on the road towards Bindston. As they approach the bandit encounter, have them roll a DC 13 Perception check. Upon a successful roll, they notice the group about 150 feet out.

Read the following text to players if they pass the check OR are within 50 feet of the cart:

You approach a cart on the side of the road with travelers flagging you down desperately, waving their arms to catch your attention. You notice a woman and four men crowding around the cart. Their clothes are tattered, and they seem to be in need.

These bandits, masquerading as travelers, are citizens of the nearby Bindston. They live on a farm on the outskirts of the town but have been severely impacted by the Mindless Malady. A group of kobolds have begun to destroy and steal their crops, inhibiting their ability to support themselves. They have resorted to robbing people on the road. Review possible scenarios below.

If...	Then...
The party approaches the cart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the men introduces himself as Zachariah and states that their cart has a broken wheel • Prompt players to make a DC 13 Insight check to notice that the woman seems to be hiding something. Upon a success, the group is immediately suspicious. • If that roll is failed, prompt players to make a DC 11 Investigation check to identify that the wheel on the cart is not damaged. • If both rolls are failed, the travelers attack the party.
The party ignores the travelers	As soon as they pass the vehicle, the travelers begin to attack the party.

[\(See Bandit stat block\)](#)

If the bandits have one or more members fall unconscious during combat, they beg for mercy and explain the truth. The bandits can be stabilized with a successful DC 10 Medicine check. Upon a failure, the unconscious bandits die. The two groups then travel together into Bindston. Before they part ways at the edge of town, the bandits tell the PCs that the farm is located on the northwestern side of Bindston if they decide to help.

Arrive to Bindston

Read the following text to players:

You arrive at Bindston safely and part with the group you met on the road. They remind you that if you are willing to help, the farm is located on the northern side of the town. As you enter the town, you are shocked by what you see. The streets of Bindston are empty except for you and the bandit group. The town appears neglected, with greenery overtaking many dwellings. Many buildings are in disrepair, and the normally bustling town square is eerily silent.

You know from stories that Bindston has had its share of hardships. The Mindless Malady is yet another blow to its denizen's morale. As you consider how to get to the infirmary, a dragonborn woman with bright eyes carrying a basket of food approaches.

The woman, completely surprised by the prospect of visitors in Bindston, greets you openly and introduces herself as Irdianas Vorroth. She notices the medallion hanging around your necks and asks if you work for The Healer's Hand.

She offers to walk you to the infirmary and says that she and Colt, the head physician, have been friends for decades. On the way, she mentions that her son has fallen ill from the malady but she knows that as soon as The Healer's Hand figures out how to help him, everything will return to normal.

As the players reach the infirmary, read the following text:

The atmospheric change between the slightly damp weather of Bindston and the bustling energy of the infirmary is startling. Everywhere, people are rushing to bedsides and wheeling cadavers through the halls. Irdianas, unfazed, takes you to a tall tabaxi and introduces him as Colt, the head physician.

Colt seems a little frantic but relieved to see the group. He has cultivated a list of people affected by the malady.

Irdianas asks Colt which number her son, Olthadesh, is on the list, and he becomes sheepish, stating that the Vorroths are not included in the first wave.

Upon hearing this information, Irdianas becomes incredibly emotional and excuses herself.

Colt gives the group a list of ten families to help. Colt tells the players to visit the families in the order they are listed and utilize one of the solutions the team has come up with. Once they successfully extract the ghost from the person it was possessing, combat will begin. See [ghost](#) stat block.

Below is the list of affected families:

Players may choose to help the Vorroth family despite having limited resources. Players should return to Colt and report that they have either completed the tasks or run out of spell slots to do so.

Irdianas Vorroth

Irdianas is a dragonborn who lives with her son, Olthadesh (ol-tha-desh). Olthadesh has contracted the Mindless Malady and is critically ill. She is eager to help the party and hopeful that her son will receive medical attention soon enough.

Colt

Colt, a native of Bindston, is a tabaxi cleric who is the head physician at the infirmary. He was thrilled to hear that The Healer's Hand was working to find a solution. He had worked with Carine in the past and felt that she was an asset to the fight against the malady.

Colt is saddened to see that the Vorroth family is not on the list, but he feels that he must follow the directions given to him.

Location	Name	Race	Description
1	Garroth Venrieth	Halfling	The Venrieths are a family of five. He and his wife, Sylzira, have three kids.
2	Urzoth	Half-orc	Urzoth has contracted the malady. She lives alone.
3	Fantina Farrowdust	Human	Fantina is a single mom who lives with her daughter, Helena.
4	Mindira Shantin	Gnome	Mindira lives with her wife, Lydys.
5	Krisbella Briarthatch	Wood elf	Krisbella lives with her fiancé, Trent.

Finish the session by announcing that players will level up between sessions from Level 3 to Level 4.

Session 3: A Summoning

Session Highlights

Players will:

- Choose a quest
 - Help Zachariah and Yesona with the kobold problem
 - Help a ghost with some unfinished business
- Meet with “Carine”¹ for the new task

Setting/Background

The players stay in Bindston for another day.

Key NPCs

- “Carine”
- Shush

Mercenary’s Day Off

The adventurers receive word the next day from the innkeeper that “Carine” and The Healer’s Hand leadership have departed from Laureli and should be arriving at Bindston by the next day. They are given a free day to choose between two tasks:

- Help Zachariah and Yesona get rid of the nuisances ruining their crops
- Spend time in town. (During which they can help a ghost take care of some unfinished business.)

Allow players to choose which task they would like to complete.

Conniving Kobolds

Five kobolds who serve a green dragon wyrmling have been destroying the crops at the Siv family’s farm. If players choose to help Zachariah and Yesona, remind them that they live on the northwestern edge of Bindston.

Read the following text to players:

¹ Starting from this point, Carine will be referred to as “Carine” to denote that Hank is impersonating Carine after her death.

As you approach the farm, you see exactly what the travelers on the road mentioned. The land ahead of you barely resembles a farm. Instead, it looks more like an untended field, encroached upon by wildlife for months. You see a small, modest home next to a larger farmhouse. As you draw closer to the home, Zachariah appears from behind a large pile of ruined crops. He seems surprised to see you but invites you into his home excitedly, calling for Yesona

Zachariah invites the group inside and sits them at the table. He and Yesona leave the group at the table to scavenge some tea for their visitors. When they arrive, Yesona tells the group about the problems they have been facing.

“We’ve seen a few reptilian creatures stealing crops in the dead of night. When Zachariah and I go out to stop them, they head north. But we don’t know the first thing about these things. They look kind of like big lizards. At first, they were only taking the crops but now they’re completely destroying what we have left. The boys you met the other day, Rivoril and Fridmare, they used to be our farmhands. But we can’t afford to keep them on because we don’t have any way to pay them.”

The players may be wondering what type of creature they are describing. If they ask, encourage them to roll a DC 13 Nature check. A success tells them that the creatures fit the description of kobolds, small lizard-like creatures who are thought to have descended from dragons.

After finishing tea with the Sivs, Zachariah leads them out to the field. He points out where he has seen the creatures disappear in the night. He states that he does not really know how to handle them at all and feels that the situation is out of his hands.

Encourage players to state what their characters might do. If they are at a loss of how to proceed, ask them to make a DC 13 Survival check to find footprints. Upon a successful check, they find a path headed northeast into the forest.

After about two hours of traveling into the forest, you stumble upon a cave. There is a small clearing in front of the cave. You don’t currently see anybody out there.

In the clearing there is a 10 foot by 15-foot pit covered with netting and foliage to camouflage it.

There is one kobold in a tree to the left that is keeping watch over the cave and the surrounding forest. If they roll a DC 17 Perception check, they see the kobold.

As the adventurers approach, ask them for a marching order and then the following ability checks:

- Have the entire group make a DC 15 Stealth check. If more than half pass, they go undetected by the kobold on watch in the trees.
 - If they fail the group check, the kobold attacks the group and calls for backup.
- Ask the player at the front of the marching order to make a DC 14 Perception check. If their passive perception is 14 or above, they notice the pit without making the check. Upon a failure, the player must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. Upon a failure of the saving throw, they take 1d10 bludgeoning damage and fall 10 feet and the kobold on patrol is now aware of their presence. Upon a success, the PC catches the ledge and does not take damage.

If the players are not stealthy enough, their movements provoke the kobold to call for the others. At the start of round three of combat, the green dragon wyrmling emerges from the cave and joins the fight. Roll initiative for the creature and add it to the turn order. Once all enemies have been defeated, they can return to Yesona and Zachariah to confirm their success.

Once the task is complete, the players return to the inn and stay another night.

Unfinished Business

If the group decides not to help the bandits, allow them a day to roam the town. During this time, they come across a ghostly figure wandering around the blacksmith's shop, trying to gain entrance.

Read the following text to players:

Walking past what appears to be the blacksmith's shop, you see a figure glowing slightly with a faint blue aura. The apparition attempts to gain entrance to the shop and peeks in the window when the door does not open. This figure is a ghost, a sight you are familiar with by this point because of your encounters yesterday.

The figure is the ghost of a man named Tarron Shatimal (tare-on sha-tu-maul). His unfinished business is that he seeks out a Sword of Life Stealing that killed his father.

Having seen many ghosts in the past day or so, the players immediately recognize Tarron as a ghost. They may be hostile as a result. If players are hostile, Tarron will try to convince them that he is not trying to break into the blacksmith shop and is just trying to speak to Fenor (feh-nor), the town's blacksmith. If players are still suspicious, ask them to roll an Insight check.

Tarron explains his predicament and says that he would like to retrieve the sword from the last person known to have it, a tiefling named Shalyre (shuh-liar), so it can never hurt others again.

Roleplaying Shalyre

True neutral, tiefling barbarian

Shalyre is known for his love of beautiful weapons and a greater love of using them in battle. He came across the Sword of Life Stealing through Fenor, Bindston's blacksmith.

Weapons of people who are tried and sentenced for their crimes get passed onto Fenor so he can make money off them. Many of them are sold to Shalyre because his passion and pockets are of equal depths.

Shalyre will not simply give up the sword. He believes that it is safe in his hands and that his interests are above Tarron's desires to see the sword put to rest.

Roleplaying Tarron

If the players accidentally kill one of the people they are helping, instructors may choose to use that NPC for this quest. If not, Tarron can be used for the quest.

Tarron Shatimal is a ghost who is unaware that he has died. As a result, he attempts to resolve unfinished business from his life.

Tarron's father was killed using a Sword of Life Stealing. The person responsible was sentenced for their actions. Until his untimely death, Tarron spent every spare moment of his life trying to track down that sword so no one could be hurt by it again. Last he heard, the sword was in the hands of a tiefling barbarian. The blacksmith was his next stop to find out more information.

Shalyre lives in town and the local blacksmith, Fenor, can help the group find him. He gives

them information about where Shalyre lives, and the group can head there. However, Fenor also tells the group that Shalyre is not going to give up the sword easily.

This encounter should be based on conversation rather than combat. Players should ideally look for peaceful and persuasive methods of convincing Shalyre to return the sword.

If the party attempts to persuade Shalyre, encourage them to create a convincing argument about why they should take the sword. Depending on the strength of their argument, adjust the DC of the Persuasion check. A lower quality argument will have a higher DC (17 or 18) whereas a higher quality argument will have a lower DC (12-15).

If the group is successful in retrieving the sword, Tarron asks them to help him destroy or hide the weapon so that no one else can be harmed.

If the group attempts to retrieve the sword through lethal means, Tarron will become angry with the group when they begin to initiate combat, so convince them to choose another way. In the event that the players engage in combat with Tarron as well, use the [ghost](#) stat block.

Once the task is complete, the players return to the inn and stay another night.

A New Task

The following day, the innkeeper knocks at their doors to alert them that “Carine” has come into town and asked to meet them for breakfast in the tavern downstairs.

Read the following text to players:

As you walk downstairs, you find the tavern empty aside from Carine and Shush. There is no tavern employee visible; instead, a buffet-style breakfast spread lines two tables. Carine is sitting, cross-legged, at the head of a set table. She turns to you all, smiling, and says, “Ah! Here you are. Good morning, take a seat.”

“Carine” provides the players with the following information:

- They are headed to Meknydis, a mining town whose population is mostly made up of gnomes. Shush will accompany the party.
- They will be using a new magic item that The Healer’s Hand has infused with protective magic.
- They will meet with Jakezegirs Deddart (jah-kez-ih-deers dead-art), the constable of Meknydis, at The Fallen Tree, the local inn. She will provide them with further information for the task.
- The group will depart immediately after breakfast.

Roleplaying Hank as Carine

For this second meeting with the party, Hank has cast disguise self and is acting as Carine.

Give players an opportunity to spot that Hank is impersonating Carine. Some ideas include:

- Shush feels Carine has been off for a couple of days. She suggests that Carine may be upset because she and Hank got into a fight before departing Laureli.
- Ask the players to make a DC 16 Perception check at some point during the meeting. Upon a success, they determine that she seems different than the first time they met.
- If the players figure out that Hank is impersonating Carine, skip to the fight in Session 4.

If...	Then...
The group asks where Hank is,	“Carine” says that he stayed in Laureli to take care of some time-sensitive Healer’s Hand business.
The group listens at the door when “Carine” and Shush leave the room,	Ask for a DC 13 Perception check. If the roll passes, they hear something being spoken in a different language. Then, ask for a DC 13 Arcana check to see if they can determine that it is an incantation. If the roll fails, they do not recognize the language.

Before the group leaves, “Carine” pulls Shush into a private room to discuss some final details with her. During this time, he is casting suggestion and provides her with the following command: “go with the group to Meknysdis and use the Ethereal Egress.” After a few minutes, they return. “Carine” tells the group to head to the Bindston stables and each pick out a horse for the journey.

Players will level up at the end of this session from Level 4 to Level 5.

Session 4: Things Go Awry

Session Highlights

Players will:

- Travel to Meknysdis with Shush
- Meet Jakezegirs Deddart
- Use the magic item, *Ethereal Egress*, to unintentionally open a portal to the Ethereal Plane
- Fight Hank

Setting

Players will travel to Meknysdis to use the “protective” enchantment.

Key NPCs

- Shush
- Jakezegirs Deddart, the mayor of Meknysdis

The players begin on the path to Meknysdis, all on horseback which should take about 6 hours in-game. No major encounters occur on the road. Ask players to make a DC 14 Insight check. Upon a success, they notice that Shush is acting strangely, but they do not glean more information than that. Upon a failure, they do not notice anything out of the ordinary.

When the players arrive to town, read the following text:

Roleplaying Shush under “Suggestion”

When Hank and Shush went to speak privately, he casts Suggestion on her, telling her to use the magic items (called Ethereal Egress) to open a tear between the Material and Ethereal Planes.

Shush will act strangely because of the spell and will be particularly focused on carrying out Hank’s instructions. Once the task is complete, the spell ends and she returns to her usual self.

When you arrive at the square, you see the group of miners Jakezegirs mentioned. They are chatting nervously. Alongside the miners are two guards who wave Jakezegirs down when she is within a reasonable distance. She introduces the two guards as Areu (pronounced “ah-roo”) and Lekitj (pronounced “le-kee”). Jakezegirs states that they will arrange everyone appropriately as per The Healer’s Hand’s instructions.

Jakezegirs introduces herself to the party and tells them of the plans for the day to protect the miners using the item they received from The Healer’s Hand. There is a small group of about

Roleplaying Jakezegirs

Lawful good

Jakezegirs Deddart is the constable of Meknysdis, responsible for taking care of its inhabitants. She is a generally good-spirited, middle-aged gnome who takes her work very seriously.

Jakezegirs believes in law and order for the protection of the innocent. For this reason, her reaction to the group opening the portal to the Ethereal Plane is cautious and calculated. She will do everything in her power to protect her people and punish anyone who puts them in harm's way.

twenty miners who are present for the protective enchantment. They are gathered in the town square anticipating the adventurers' arrival.

Jakezegirs walks them over to the town square, talking about the town and some of its history on the way. She also mentions the difficulties they have experienced because of the malady. Since it is solely a mining town, having this many workers out of commission is harmful to their productivity and livelihood.

Ethereal Egress

Wondrous item, legendary

This item is a round stone with a blue glow in the center of it. When you concentrate on the item for one minute, you create a tear between the Material and Ethereal Planes, allowing inhabitants from the latter to enter the former. The tear is 5 feet wide and stays open for one minute or until the concentration of the item's user is broken.

Once the miners are in position, Shush stands in front of them with the magic item. After a minute of concentrating on the item, read the following text to players:

As Shush concentrates on the item, it begins to emit a faint blue glow which grows over the course of about a minute. Then, the glow completely disappears; the air is stale as everyone holds their breath in anticipation. After a moment of silence, the sound of a thousand papers being ripped simultaneously fills the area, and a slight fracture in reality begins growing right in front of you. You watch as the tear widens, revealing a misty version of your current location tinged in the same color blue of the ghosts you encountered yesterday. The tear grows to be about five feet in width and as it stretches, you see ghosts flood out of the opening.

Ask players to roll for initiative. Roll initiative for Shush as well.

Place three ghosts on the battlefield, telling the party that the remainder of those that come through moved towards Meknysdis's citizens to try and possess them. GMs should also roll for the initiative of the ghosts. See ghost stat block [here](#).

NOTE: For simplicity, GMs can choose to have the ghosts take their turns on the same initiative count.

On their turn, the ghosts on the battlefield will attempt to possess one of the miners. If they fail, they will fight the party in their ethereal forms. Additionally, now that Shush has completed Hank's request, *suggestion* is over, bringing her into her right mind. However, due to the nature of the item, she is unsure of how to close the rift and spends her turn continuing to concentrate on it.

On the second round of combat, "Carine" arrives. Read the following text to players:

Suddenly, you see a familiar face entering the field of combat. Carine appears, and you notice Shush's frantic disposition turn to one of relief. However, Carine does not appear startled at all by the sight of the current onslaught. Instead, she seems enthralled by the battle taking place.

"Thank you all so much for your help," she says, smiling deviously. "I could not have done this without you." As she finishes her words, her appearance shifts to reveal Hank. He continues, stating, "I knew that when we met, you'd be the perfect scapegoats for my plan. Kadrughis was beginning to lose confidence in me. But thanks to you dullards, I can finally get what I want. I think he will be quite pleased with me when he sees all of the bodies I've left for him. Carine's included." He looks to Shush specifically and says, "There's always going to be collateral damage."

Ask the players to make a DC 13 Insight check. Upon a success, they realize that Hank has been impersonating Carine. Roll initiative for Hank and add him to the turn order.

If the players can end concentration on the item by causing damage to Shush, the rift closes and any ghosts not possessing a body disappear back into the Ethereal Plane. If it seems that the players are going to lose, have them make a DC 13 Arcana check. Upon a success, they remember concentration can be broken by causing damage to the spellcaster.

The players can then concentrate on Hank. If the party succeeds in defeating him, read the following text to the players:

The chaos settles, revealing casualties amongst some of the miners and villagers that gathered to watch the events transpire. As you look around, you see Jakezegirs frantically calling for guards to restrain you. She says, “How could you bring this to my people? You were meant to help us.”

Players may attempt to persuade Jakezegirs of their intentions, but she calls for the guards to arrest the group despite their pleas, including Shush. Once the group is restrained, Jakezegirs casts “*sending*” and communicates the situation to Laureli leadership. One of the guards casts the spell Teleportation Circle, and the group is escorted to the Laureli holding area for the moment.

In the holding cell, a half orc introduces herself as Auerah (pronounced “aura”), the head of the Laureli Guard. She notifies the group that, due to the events that just occurred, they will need to explain what has happened to the Laureli High Council. They will be kept in the holding cells for a few hours before the council convenes.

Before the next session, ask students to prepare what they will discuss with the Laureli High Council. While they may have done nothing wrong, they will need to make this clear to the High Council who is only aware that innocent people were endangered by something seemingly caused by the party. Additionally, ask them if there are any loose ends they would like to tie up regarding The Healer’s Hand or any of the quests from Bindston.

Session 5: A Convincing Conclusion

Session Highlights

Players will:

- Explain the events that have just transpired to Laureli's High Council
- Tie up any loose ends

Setting

Players have been teleported back to Laureli to clear their names.

Key NPCs

- Auerah, half orc, the head of the Laureli Guard
- The Laureli High Council
 - Rolamin Isteno (roll-ah-meen eye-steno), high elf
 - Ipalin (ip-alin) Finestone, gnome
 - Halie Underhill, halfling

Read the following text to players:

You are escorted from the holding cells across the city to a beautiful building with tall columns made of gray stone. As Auerah leads you through the columns into an elaborate chamber with three ornate seats at the front occupied by a high elf man, a gnome man, and a halfling woman.

Auerah introduces each of the council members to the party. Players should make their case about The Healer's Hand and what they know of the situation that took place. Students should use rhetorical strategies to convince the Laureli Council that they had no knowledge of Hank's plans and did not intentionally open the gate to the Ethereal Plane.

After students have presented the information to the council, ask those involved in the description to roll a DC 16 Persuasion check. Depending on the quality of their persuasion in character, it is up to the GM's discretion to add a bonus or provide inspiration for the roll.

Read the following text to students:

The three councilmembers depart the chamber briefly, leaving you alone with Auerah. You wait for about five minutes while they presumably decide whether to believe you or not. Then, the council reappears, standing before you. The halfling woman, Halie Underhill, speaks up. "Thank you for your service on this day. We are so saddened by what has transpired but are grateful for your part in reducing the losses of our great region. You are free to go."

Encourage students to do what they planned to tie up loose ends regarding their quests. Once a satisfying conclusion has been reached, announce the end of the campaign.

Resources

Monster Stat Blocks

Bandit

Medium human, neutral good

Armor Class: 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points: 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed: 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. Hit: 4 (1d6+1) slashing damage

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft/320 ft, one target. Hit: 4 (1d8+1)

Black Bear

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class: 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed: 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills: Perception +3

Senses: passive Perception 13

Languages: n/a

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Smell. The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Bronze Dragon Wyrmling

Medium dragon, lawful good

Armor Class: 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points: 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws: Dex +2, Con +4, Wis +2, Cha +4

Skills: Perception +4, Stealth +2

Damage Immunities: lightning

Senses: blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages: Draconic

Challenge: 2 (450 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Lightning Breath. The dragon exhales lightning in a 40-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Repulsion Breath. The dragon exhales repulsion energy in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is pushed 30 feet away from the dragon.

Giant Wolf Spider

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class: 13

Hit Points: 11 (2d8+2)

Speed: 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Skills: Perception +3, Stealth +8

Senses: blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages: n/a

Challenge: 1/4 (50 XP)

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d6 + 1) piercing damage plus (2d6) poison damage. The target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking the poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Ghost

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class: 11

Hit Points: 22 (5d5+5)

Speed: 0 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Immunities: Poison, necrotic

Condition Immunities: Exhausted, poisoned

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages: Common

Challenge: 2 (750 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The ghost can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Actions

Withering Touch. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (4d6 + 3) necrotic damage.

Possession (1/day). One humanoid that the ghost can see within 5 ft. of it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the ghost; the ghost then disappears, and the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The ghost now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The ghost can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that turn undead, and it retains its alignment, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, and immunity to being frightened. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies. The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the ghost ends it as a bonus action, or the ghost is turned or forced out by an effect like the dispel evil and good spell. When possession ends, the ghost reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the body. The target is immune to this ghost's Possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Ice Mephit

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class: 11

Hit Points: 21 (6d6)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills: Perception +2, Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities: bludgeoning, fire

Damage Immunities: cold, poison **Condition**

Immunities poisoned **Senses:** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages: Aquan, Auran

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of jagged ice. Each creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

False Appearance. While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary shard of ice.

Innate Spellcasting (1/Day). The mephit can innately cast *fog cloud*, requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma.

Actions

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) cold damage.

Frost Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of cold air. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Magma Mephit

Small elemental, neutral evil

Armor Class: 11

Hit Points: 22 (5d5+5)

Speed: 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills: Perception +2, Stealth +3

Damage Vulnerabilities: cold

Damage Immunities: fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Ignan, Terran

Challenge: 1/2 (100 XP)

Death Burst. When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of lava. Each creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

False Appearance. While the mephit remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary mound of magma.

Innate Spellcasting (1/Day). The mephit can innately cast *heat metal* (spell save DC 10), requiring no material components. Its innate spellcasting ability is Charisma.

Actions

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) fire damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 6). The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of fire. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Quasit

Tiny fiend (demon, shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class: 13

Hit Points: 7 (3d4)

Speed: 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills: Stealth +5

Damage Resistances: cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities: poison

Condition Immunities: poisoned

Senses: darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages: Abyssal, Common

Challenge: 1 (200 XP)

Shapechanger. The quasit can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a bat (speed 10 ft. fly 40 ft.), a centipede (40 ft., climb 40 ft.), or a toad (40 ft., swim 40 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Magic Resistance. The quasit has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Claws (Bite in Beast Form). Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Scare (1/Day). One creature of the quasit's choice within 20 feet of it must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if the quasit is within line of sight, ending the effect on itself on a success.

NPC Stat Blocks

Aero

Drow Rogue, neutral good

Armor Class: 14

Hit Points: 15

Speed: 30 ft.

Initiative: +3

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills: Perception +2, Stealth +6

Languages: Elvish and Undercommon

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack. +6 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack. +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Felnor Ravnia

Human Fighter, chaotic good

Armor Class: 16

Hit Points: 16

Speed: 30 ft.

Initiative: -1

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills: Athletic +5, Intimidation +2

Languages: Common and Elvish

Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack. +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack. +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Caelynn Nailo

Half-elf paladin, neutral good

Armor Class: 16

Hit Points: 17

Speed: 30 ft.

Initiative: -1

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills: Persuasion +4, Medicine +4

Languages: Elvish and Common

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack. +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

Spellcasting:

1st Level ○○○

- Bless
- Faerie Fire
- Cure

Shush

Dragonborn Cleric, lawful good

Armor Class: 16

Hit Points: 38

Speed: 30 ft.

Initiative: -1

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills: Insight +6, Medicine +6, Religion +3

Languages: Common, Draconic, and Undercommon

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack. +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack. +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+4) piercing damage. *Spellcasting.*

Spellcasting:

Cantrips

- Guidance
- Resistance
- Sacred Flame

1st Level ○○○○

- Bless
- Cure Wounds

2nd Level ○○○

- Lesser Restoration
- Spiritual Weapon

3rd Level ○○

- Beacon of Hope
- Revivify

Urok Kelkar

Half-Orc Barbarian, chaotic good

Armor Class: 17

Hit Points: 18

Speed: 30 ft.

Initiative: +1

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills: Athletic +5, Intimidation +2

Languages: Common and Orc

Racial Features:

Relentless Endurance. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

Actions

Greataxe. Melee Weapon Attack. +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Javelin. Ranged Weapon Attack. +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

D&D BEYOND

Hank Woodore

CHARACTER NAME

Wizard 10	Game Master
CLASS & LEVEL	PLAYER NAME
Variant Human	Custom Background
RACE	BACKGROUND
Experience Points	

STRENGTH

-1

8

DEXTERITY

+0

10

CONSTITUTION

+1

12

INTELLIGENCE

+5

20

WISDOM

+2

15

CHARISMA

+1

13

Strength

Dexterity

Constitution

Intelligence

Wisdom

Charisma

Saving Throw Modifiers

Acrobatics DEX

Animal Handling WIS

Arcana INT

Athletics STR

Deception CHA

History INT

Insight WIS

Intimidation CHA

Investigation INT

Medicine WIS

Nature INT

Perception WIS

Performance CHA

Persuasion CHA

Religion INT

Sleight of Hand DEX

Stealth DEX

Survival WIS

SKILLS

+0

INITIATIVE

15

ARMOR CLASS

Resistances - Necrotic*

DEFENSES

INSPIRATION

+4

PROFICIENCY BONUS

ABILITY SAVE DC

30 ft. (Walking)

SPEED

Max HP

131

Current HP

Temp HP

--

HIT POINTS

Total 10d8

HIT DICE

SUCCESSSES

FAILURES

DEATH SAVES

=== WEAPONS ===

Crossbow, Light Dagger, Dart, Quarterstaff, Sling

=== LANGUAGES ===

Common, Draconic, Elvish, Undercommon

PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

=== ACTIONS ===

Standard Actions

Attack, Cast a Spell, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, Help, Hide, Ready, Search, Use an Object, Opportunity Attack, Grapple, Shove, Improvise, Two-Weapon Fighting, Interact with an Object

=== SPECIAL ===

Arcane Recovery - 1 / Long Rest

Once per day when you finish a short rest, you can choose expended spell slots to recover - up to a combined level of 5, and none of the slots can be 6th level or higher.

Sculpt Spells

When you cast an evocation spell that affects other creatures that you can see, you can choose a number of them equal to 1 + the spell's level. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell, and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a successful save.

ACTIONS

12 PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

12 PASSIVE WISDOM (INSIGHT)

15 PASSIVE INTELLIGENCE (INVESTIGATION)

SENSES

NAME	HIT	DAMAGE/TYPE	NOTES
Chill Touch	+9	2d8 Necrotic	D: 1Rnd, V/S
Ray of Frost	+9	2d8 Cold	V/S
Shocking Grasp	+9	2d8 Lightning	V/S
Unarmed Strike	+3	0 Bludgeoning	

WEAPON ATTACKS & CANTRIPS

TM & © 2018 Wizards of the Coast LLC. ©2018 D&D Beyond | All Rights Reserved. Permission is granted to photo copy this document for personal use.

D&D BEYOND

Hank Woodore
CHARACTER NAME

Male	40	Medium	5'10"	170
GENDER	AGE	SIZE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
Neutral Evil		Tanned	Brown	Long brown
ALIGNMENT	FAITH	SKIN	EYES	HAIR

CHARACTER APPEARANCE

=== Allies ===

Former - Carine Dressali
Current - Zadrughis

=== Organizations ===

The Healer's Hand

ALLIES & ORGANIZATIONS

I ... speak ... slowly ... when talking ... to idiots, ... which ... almost ... everyone ... is ... compared ... to me. I've read every book in the world's greatest libraries—or I like to boast that I

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Knowledge. The path to power and self-improvement is through knowledge. (Neutral)

IDEALS

I sold my soul for knowledge. I hope to do great deeds and win it back.

BONDS

Unlocking an ancient mystery is worth the price of a civilization. I am easily distracted by the promise

FLAWS

D&D BEYOND

Wizard
SPELLCASTING CLASS

INT	17	+9
SPELLCASTING ABILITY	SPELL SAVE DC	SPELL ATTACK BONUS

PREP SPELL NAME	SOURCE	SAVE/ATK	TIME	RANGE	COMP	DURATION	PAGE REF	NOTES
=== CANTRIPS ===								
(At Will)								
<input type="checkbox"/> Ray of Frost	Wizard	+9	1A	60 ft.	V.S	Instantaneous	PHB 271	V/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Chill Touch	Wizard	+9	1A	120 ft.	V.S	1 round	PHB 221	D: 1Rnd, V/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Shocking Grasp	Wizard	+9	1A	Touch	V.S	Instantaneous	PHB 275	V/S
=== 1st LEVEL ===								
4 Slots OOOO								
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Knife	Wizard	DEX 17 / +9	1A	60 ft./5 ft. Sphere	S,M	Instantaneous	EE 157	5 ft. Sphere, S/M
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise Self	Wizard	--	1A	Self	V.S	1 hour	PHB 233	D: 1h, V/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm Person	Wizard	WIS 17	1A	30 ft.	V.S	1 hour	PHB 221	D: 1h, V/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Fog Cloud <C>	Wizard	--	1A	120 ft./20 ft. Sphere	V,S	Concentration, up to 1 hour	PHB 243	D: 1h, 20 ft. Sphere, V/S
=== 2nd LEVEL ===								
3 Slots OOO								
<input type="checkbox"/> Suggestion <C>	Wizard	WIS 17	1A	30 ft.	V,M	Concentration, up to 8 hours	PHB 279	D: 8h, V/M
=== 3rd LEVEL ===								
3 Slots OOO								
<input type="checkbox"/> Vampiric Touch <C>	Wizard	+9	1A	Self	V.S	Concentration, up to 1 minute	PHB 285	D: 1m, V/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Animate Dead	Wizard	--	1m	10 ft.	V,S,M	Instantaneous	PHB 212	V/S/M
<input type="checkbox"/> Fear <C>	Wizard	WIS 17	1A	Self/30 ft. Cone	V,S,M	Concentration, up to 1 minute	PHB 239	D: 1m, 30 ft. Cone, V/S/M
<input type="checkbox"/> Protection from Energy <C>	Wizard	--	1A	Touch	V.S	Concentration, up to 1 hour	PHB 270	D: 1h, V/S
=== 5th LEVEL ===								
2 Slots OO								
<input type="checkbox"/> Dominate Person <C>	Wizard	WIS 17	1A	60 ft.	V.S	Concentration, up to 1 minute	PHB 235	Ext. D: (See Description)*, D: 1m, V/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Modify Memory <C>	Wizard	WIS 17	1A	30 ft.	V.S	Concentration, up to 1 minute	PHB 261	Special: (See Description)*, D: 1m, V/S

Spells

Command, 1st level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: Verbal
Duration: 1 round
Classes: Cleric, Paladin

You speak a one-word command to a creature you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or follow the command on its next turn. The spell has no effect if the target is undead, if it doesn't understand your language, or if your command is directly harmful to it. Some typical commands and their effects follow. You might issue a command other than one described here. If you do so, the GM determines how the target behaves. If the target can't follow your command, the spell ends. Approach. The target moves toward you by the shortest and most direct route, ending its turn if it moves within 5 feet of you. Drop. The target drops whatever it is holding and then ends its turn. Flee. The target spends its turn moving away from you by the fastest available means. Grovel. The target falls prone and then ends its turn. Halt. The target doesn't move and takes no actions. A flying creature stays aloft, provided that it is able to do so. If it must move to stay aloft, it flies the minimum distance needed to remain in the air.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can affect one additional creature for each slot level above 1st. The creatures must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

Conjure minor elemental, 4th level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: 90 feet
Components: Verbal, somatic
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour
Classes: Druid, Wizard

You summon elementals that appear in unoccupied spaces that you can see within range. You choose one the following options for what appears: One elemental of challenge rating 2 or lower Two elementals of challenge rating 1 or lower Four elementals of challenge rating 1/2 or lower Eight elementals of challenge rating 1/4 or lower. An elemental summoned by this spell disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends. The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. They obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions. The GM has the creatures' statistics.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using certain higher-level Spell Slots, you choose one of the summoning options above, and more creatures appear - twice as many with a 6th-level slot and three times as many with an 8th-level slot.

Dispel evil and good, 5th level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: Verbal, somatic, material (Holy water or powdered silver and iron)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Classes: Cleric, Paladin

Shimmering energy surrounds and protects you from fey, undead, and creatures originating from beyond the Material Plane. For the duration, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead have disadvantage on attack rolls against you.

You can end the spell early by using either of the following special functions.

Break Enchantment. As your action, you touch a creature you can reach that is charmed, frightened, or possessed by a celestial, an elemental, a fey, a fiend, or an undead. The creature you touch is no longer charmed, frightened, or possessed by such creatures.

Dismissal. As your action, make a melee spell attack against a celestial, an elemental, a fey, a fiend, or an undead you can reach. On a hit, you attempt to drive the creature back to its home plane. The creature must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or be sent back to its home plane (if it isn't there already). If they aren't on their home plane, undead are sent to the Shadowfell, and fey are sent to the Feywild.

Hallow, 5th level evocation

Casting Time: 24 hours

Range: Touch

Components: Verbal, somatic, material (Herbs, oils, and incense worth at least 1,000 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Until dispelled

Classes: Cleric

You touch a point and infuse an area around it with holy (or unholy) power. The area can have a radius up to 60 feet, and the spell fails if the radius includes an area already under the effect of a hallow spell. The affected area is subject to the following effects.

First, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead can't enter the area, nor can such creatures charm, frighten, or possess creatures within it. Any creature charmed, frightened, or possessed by such a creature is no longer charmed, frightened, or possessed upon entering the area. You can exclude one or more of those types of creatures from this effect.

Second, you can bind an extra effect to the area. Choose the effect from the following list, or choose an effect offered by the GM. Some of these effects apply to creatures in the area; you can designate whether the effect applies to all creatures, creatures that follow a specific deity or leader, or creatures of a specific sort, such as orcs or trolls. When a creature that would be affected enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it can make a Charisma saving throw. On a success, the creature ignores the extra effect until it leaves the area.

Courage. Affected creatures can't be frightened while in the area.

Darkness. Darkness fills the area. Normal light, as well as magical light created by spells of a lower level than the slot you used to cast this spell, can't illuminate the area.

Daylight. Bright light fills the area. Magical darkness created by spells of a lower level than the slot you used to cast this spell can't extinguish the light.

Energy Protection. Affected creatures in the area have resistance to one damage type of your choice, except for bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing.

Energy Vulnerability. Affected creatures in the area have vulnerability to one damage type of your choice, except for bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing.

Everlasting Rest. Dead bodies interred in the area can't be turned into undead.

Extradimensional Interference. Affected creatures can't move or travel using teleportation or by extradimensional or interplanar means.

Fear. Affected creatures are frightened while in the area.

Silence. No sound can emanate from within the area, and no sound can reach into it.

Tongues. Affected creatures can communicate with any other creature in the area, even if they don't share a common language.

Magic circle, 3rd level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: 10 feet

Components: Verbal, somatic, material (Holy water or powdered silver and iron worth at least 100 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: 1 hour

Classes: Cleric, Paladin, Warlock, Wizard

You create a 10-foot-radius, 20-foot-tall cylinder of magical energy centered on a point on the ground that you can see within range. Glowing runes appear wherever the cylinder intersects with the floor or other surface. Choose one or more of the following types of creatures: celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, or undead. The circle affects a creature of the chosen type in the following ways: The creature can't willingly enter the cylinder by nonmagical means. If the creature tries to use teleportation or interplanar travel to do so, it must first succeed on a Charisma saving throw. The creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against targets within the cylinder. Targets within the cylinder can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by the creature. When you cast this spell, you can elect to cause its magic to operate in the reverse direction, preventing a creature of the specified type from leaving the cylinder and protecting targets outside it.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the Duration increases by 1 hour for each slot level above 3rd.

Protection from evil and good, 1st level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: Verbal, somatic, material (Holy water or powdered silver and iron, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Classes: Cleric, Paladin, Warlock, Wizard

Until the spell ends, one willing creature you touch is protected against certain types of creatures: aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead.

The protection grants several benefits. Creatures of those types have disadvantage on attack rolls against the target. The target also can't be charmed, frightened, or possessed by them. If the target is already charmed, frightened, or possessed by such a creature, the target has advantage on any new saving throw against the relevant effect.

Suggestion, 2nd level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: Verbal, material (A snake's tongue and either a bit of honeycomb or a drop of sweet oil)

Duration: Concentration, up to 8 hours

Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You suggest a course of activity (limited to a sentence or two) and magically influence a creature you can see within range that can hear and understand you. Creatures that can't be charmed are immune to this effect. The suggestion must be worded in such a manner as to make the course of action sound reasonable. Asking the creature to stab itself, throw itself onto a spear, immolate itself, or do some other obviously harmful act ends the spell.

The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it pursues the course of action you described to the best of its ability. The suggested course of action can continue for the entire duration. If the suggested activity can be completed in a shorter time, the spell ends when the subject finishes what it was asked to do.

You can also specify conditions that will trigger a special activity during the duration. For example, you might suggest that a knight give her warhorse to the first beggar she meets. If the condition isn't met before the spell expires, the activity isn't performed.

If you or any of your companions damage the target, the spell ends.

Instructor Resources

Writing and running a TRPG is a lot of work, especially when undertaking the task of creating a world from scratch. However, there are many resources available that can relieve some of the burden. Below is a comprehensive list of resources and their purpose, some of which I have used to design my game.

Game Examples

To run a successful campaign, it is important to see good examples of successful campaigns at work.

D&Diesel with Vin Diesel

Access Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLEmb_RIZ30&t=82s

Vin Diesel brings his Witch Hunter character to life alongside talented voice actors such as Matthew Mercer (the Dungeon Master of the popular *D&D* web show Critical Role). This is a short example of how a game of *D&D* might look.

Core Game Resources

From Wizards of the Coast, these are some guides you may find useful in the creation/adaptation of your game.

Dungeon Master's Guide by Wizards of the Coast

Price: \$30-\$50

This additional resource can provide more guidance on creating encounters, monsters, and settings for your game. This is supplemental, meaning that it is not necessary but can provide you with more options for customizing your game.

Game Creation Guides

The most important aspect of your game is using available tools to guide yourself through the project. One of the most wonderful parts of the TRPG community is the sharing of knowledge.

Bruno Lauris: How to Start Designing Your First Tabletop Role-Playing Game

Access Link: <https://medium.com/a-taste-of-madness/level-zero-how-to-start-designing-your-first-tabletop-role-playing-game-c70820702041>

This guide talks any budding Game Master through the first steps of creating a unique TRPG. While many instructors new to this idea may not want to start from scratch, this tool will help to guide your thinking in the right path.

The DM Lair: D&D Campaign Creation

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeqyCf7CHHU>

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO_VAN8Ie00&t=1625s

Luke Hart is an experienced DM who creates videos about playing and running *D&D* campaigns. He has a two-part series where he discusses the theory of his campaign creation and then creates a campaign in real time.

Character Examples and Management

Wizards of the Coast's Starter Set Characters

Price: Free

Access Link: https://media.wizards.com/downloads/dnd/StarterSet_Charactersv2.pdf

These five pre-set characters make great examples of completed character sheets that can be customized and used by students as guides for completing unique ones.

Campaign Managers

There is a lot of information that will be stored for your campaign. Campaign managers can make that data storage much easier. Many products exist to help you with your game organization.

D&D Compendium: Comprehensive List of Campaign Managers

Access Link: <https://www.dnd-compendium.com/dm-resources/campaign-managers>

There is a lot of information that will be stored for your campaign. *D&D* Compendium has aggregated a list of campaign managers, free and unpaid, to help you organize your game.

Campfire Pro

Access Link:

https://www.campfiretechnology.com/pro/?gclid=CjoKCQjwhvf6BRckARIsAGl1GGhYsZ9eXGdIE798iGrFJ3NPKT5rtCYPnOdeGtdqZ_aNLHk4puS87qwaAscyEALw_wcB

Campfire Pro is a program that allows easy management of the characters, settings, timelines, and other integral elements of your TRPG. There is both a free and paid subscription. The free version is limited in its functionality but could still be helpful in the starting phase of game creation and management.

Generators

Because of the in-depth nature of TRPGs, there is much information that you will spend hours creating. However, there are many facets that do not need to be fully customized and can be randomly generated instead.

Fantasy Name Generator

Access Link: <https://www.fantasynamegenerators.com/>

Fantasy Name Generator takes the pain out of fabricating names for your characters. This could be useful for both students and instructors.

Campaign Start Generator

Access Link: <http://dndspeak.com/2018/05/100-campaign-start-scenarios/>

One of the hardest parts of creating a campaign is coming up with an inciting incident to unite the players. This campaign start generator provides 100 different story ideas to bring the party together and even a button that will choose one for you.

Random Dungeon Generator

Access Link: <https://donjon.bin.sh/5e/dungeon/>

If you would like to add a dungeon encounter to your game but do not want to spend too much time creating it, this dungeon generator will automatically save you many hours of work. The details can be altered to fit your needs.

Magic Shop Generator

Access Link: <https://5emagic.shop/>

Create a magic shop with a variety of items from this generator.

Character Generator

Access Link: <https://fastcharacter.com/>

If you need a character, this website will create a sheet for you. This is useful for both instructors as well as students.

Assorted Generators and Plot Ideas

Access Link: <https://www.dnd-compendium.com/dm-resources/plot-hooks>

D&D Compendium has created a collection of adventure ideas, quests, and plot hooks for your future story. Add any of these to customize your game.

Student Materials

Required

Character Sheet

Price: Free

Access Link: <https://dnd.wizards.com/products/tabletop-games/trpg-resources/trpg-resources>

Your character sheet is the most valuable physical tool you can have! While you may opt for an online version (see *D&D* Beyond below), Wizards of the Coast provides a downloadable version of the original character sheet. By accessing the link above, you can also find pre-generated character sheets if the task of creating your own feels daunting.

Basic Rules

Price: Free

Access Link: <https://dnd.wizards.com/products/tabletop/players-basic-rules>

While the Player's Handbook (noted below) is much more comprehensive, the most important things you need to know about *D&D* are included in the basic rules linked here. Learn how to create a character, play the game, and more.

Roll20.net

Price: Free

Roll20 is a website designed for players to experience the game together. Players can turn on their cameras to be visible during the game as well as control their characters on a DM-created battle map. Roll20 also has an integrated chat feature as well as a dice roller.

Recommended

A Set of Dice

Price: Varies

Dice are an integral part of *D&D*. While there are many online resources for rolling dice, many find it more exciting to roll physical dice. If you were to opt for physical dice, it is recommended to purchase at least one of each of the following: 1 four-sided die (d4), 1 six-sided die (d6), 1 eight-sided die (d8), 1 ten-sided die (d10), 1 twelve-sided die (d12), 1 twenty-sided die (d20).

Player's Handbook by Wizards of the Coast

Price: \$27-\$50

This handbook contains all of the rules for Dungeons & Dragons as well as a plethora of information to help you create a character for the game. While there are many additional sourcebooks, the PHB is crucial to the *D&D* experience.

D&D Beyond

Price: Free but with some paid optional, premium features

D&D Beyond is a website that can house your character sheet and make character management extremely easy to use.

5th Edition Spellbook (Phone Application)

Price: Free

If you play a spellcaster, you may find it helpful to access your spells in a handy app such as this. The spells are separated by level, class, and type to make it easy to add to your spellbook. You can even keep track of your character's spells in the app.

Appendix B

Assignment Sheets

Character History Assignment

Overview

Every great character has a backstory that may include a series of triumphs, heartbreaks, and failures. For example, Katniss Everdeen's resourcefulness in the wake of her father's death helped her to survive and win the 74th Hunger Games. Batman tragically lost his parents before becoming Gotham City's infamous vigilante. These personal events give audiences insight into why a character behaves in a certain way and what kind of person they are. Now, it is your turn to bring your character to life by crafting a character history.

Instructions

Choose one of the following media formats for constructing your Character History. Your submission should clearly illustrate events in your character's backstory as well as their personality traits.

- Prose narrative
- Character resume and cover letter
- Vision board (mixed media or digital)
- Podcast (interview or documentary-style)
- Ballad or long poem
- Comic
- Social media page
- Short video narrative
- Alternative method (with instructor approval)

Each work should:

- Explain why the character wants to partake in the quest with The Healer's Hand
- Illustrate the character's personality (traits, bonds, flaws, ideals, and alignment)
- Use the affordances of the chosen genre or medium

Outcomes

This project will satisfy the following course outcomes:

- Students will be able to write recursively for a variety of purposes and audiences
- Students will be able to apply appropriate rhetorical conventions in multiple media

Formatting Requirements

Will vary with the modality you use to present your character's history. If in doubt, consult your instructor.

Character Motivation

There are several reasons your character works for The Healer's Hand. You may use some of the possibilities below as a starting point or create your own:

- You have a relative in Laureli that recommended you for the quest.
- You have family members who died of the malady and want to make a positive difference.
- You have always looked up to Carine and want to learn from her.
- Your livelihood has been negatively impacted by the malady, so you are desperate for work.

Sample Backstory

Sierra Brightly, Tabaxi Bard

My name is Sierra, and boy, do I have a story. I grew up on the outskirts of the Sierra Izmaglica, where the Skol Alps kiss the mountain range. I had a life in those mountains, but it was...less than glamorous is a good way to put it. I had to leave. I had to go somewhere else so that I could BE someone. Growing up, my father always told us stories about Calcian Sillonius, the famous wizard who attended the Academy and fought valiantly against many foes. My family has always had reverence for physical labor and hard work whereas my interests were performative more than anything else. While our interests have always varied, I sought valor as well. Just through other means. Despite our differences, we all worshipped Calcian.

While my family members, especially my big brother Heddan, loomed large amongst our clan, I weigh barely 120 pounds soaking wet. I was hardly bound to be the warrior type. My interests were skewed towards creative endeavors. One thing my family and I do have in common, though, was our love of gambling. I get it from my mom, who would go into Vintaheim and spend her week's earnings in one of those hole-in-the-wall joints. I followed in her footsteps but had to take it a step further.

I'm known for being a people person—a little too much so, apparently. I persuaded Cornaith Thelee, an elder elf with an abundance of money, into becoming my manager. I signed a contract with him, but I quickly received offers from other club owners to perform at their properties and pursued those opportunities despite a non-compete clause. When he found out, he erupted in a rage; I suppose I didn't cover my tracks well enough. My family and I escaped to Nakia to start a new life. The night life was more than enough to fulfill their need to party and gamble. As always, I wasn't satisfied.

I took my talents to Applton and tried my hand at becoming a cover artist. I would go to bars and night clubs, disguising myself as famous artists and singing their songs as accurately as I could. Remembering those tales of Calcian, I applied to the Hero Institute to follow in his footsteps and

find out more about his death and the mystery surrounding it. Going to the Hero Institute, I am hoping to make more money for myself and my family and keep myself out of the view of Thelee. As excited as I am to join the Hero Institute, I know that if Thelee were to find me, I'd have to leave and start over again, and I am prepared to do so.

Scholar Character Sheet

Overview

In *Dungeons & Dragons*, every player character (PC) has a character sheet that shows the character's skills and past. Character sheets tell a story and give deeper insight into the abilities of the character described. An important element of delving into your discipline's discourse is understanding the strengths of prominent scholars in the field. While not much may be known about them personally, their legacy remains in their writing as well as how they respond to others.

Instructions

Pick a figure from your field of study and create a character sheet that depicts their skills and history. Choose at least five of the following elements to complete your scholar's character sheet.

- Class
- Stats and skills (including proficiencies)
- Attacks and weapons (or spells)
- Character history
- Background
- Alignment
- Special features
- Other aspects of the character sheet you find appropriate to add

You may use spells/attacks/weapons that already exist or create some features of your own that make sense for your specific scholar. You should defend your choices by referencing their work in your Process Log for this assignment.

You may also choose a prominent figure in history as an alternative.

Outcomes

This project will satisfy the following outcomes for this course –

- Students will be able to craft effective arguments
- Students will be able to conduct and synthesize research

Formatting Requirements

You may use either *D&D Beyond* or the Wizards of the Coast 5E character sheet to complete this assignment. Your Process Log should include in-text citations and a reference page in the style used most in your field (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.).

Technical Text Assignment

Overview

Players involved in games such as *D&D* often require or benefit from ancillary texts. You experienced this firsthand at the beginning of our campaign when you looked for ways to remove ghosts from the affected NPCs. From character quick builds like *Critical Role's* Handbooker Helper videos to campaign modules such as Wizards of the Coast's *Princes of the Apocalypse*, these texts serve their various purposes for audiences who consume them. In small groups, use your knowledge of the game and the conventions of each of the following texts to create one of your own. Ensure that the choices you make reflect conscious decision making with reference to the genre, audience, and purpose of the text.

Instructions

Using the medium of your choice, compose one of the following documents for your assignment:

- Game Guide
 - a. Write an informative and persuasive text to help someone with an interest in TRPGs. This text should have a clear purpose and audience (e.g., I want to create a guide for new players about how to create a character).
- Design a Quest
 - a. Create a one-hour long session that could supplement any game module. The quest should include a plot hook, relevant NPC and monster stat blocks, maps, and descriptions for the GM.
- Map Creation
 - a. Choose a large-scale map (city) and small-scale map (battle map) to help future players of this campaign. Consider the necessary elements (a map key, buildings, location names, terrain, etc.), and use the information you have learned throughout the game to support your choices.

Outcomes

This project will satisfy the following outcomes for this course –

- Students will be able to apply appropriate rhetorical conventions in multiple media
- Students will be able to write recursively for a variety of purposes and audiences

Formatting Requirements

Will vary with the modality you choose. If in doubt, consult your instructor.

Process Log

Overview

One of the most important aspects of the composing process is thinking critically about decisions made throughout the development of the text. Many of the rhetorical choices we make are unintentional or determined by modality and media affordances; however, it is vital that we as writers consider our conscious choices as well (Shipka, 2009). It is important to be explicit in these self-reflections because it gives us more control in rhetorical situations by providing us with deeper insight into our strengths and the affordances of each modality.

Instructions

Create a Progress Log (Faigley et al., 1985) that details the choices you made throughout the composition process of each major assignment. Your work should address the following questions:

- Why did you choose the modality used in this work over other available modes? What affordances and constraints does the medium possess? How did you utilize/work around those affordances and constraints?
- What does this piece accomplish? How does it accomplish it?
- What specific knowledge, skills, and literacies were necessary to complete this work? Did you learn something new to compose the text?

Outcomes

This project will satisfy the following outcomes for this course –

- Students will be able to produce critical reflections on one's writing and research processes

Formatting Requirements

Process Logs may vary in length and organization but should be at least two pages long, double-spaced. You may choose a readable font and the text size should be comparable to Times New Roman 12 pt.

References

- Alexander, J. (2009). Gaming, student literacies, and the composition classroom: Some possibilities for transformation. *College Composition and Communication*, 61(1), pp. 35-63.
- Bizzell, P. (1994). "Contact zones" and English studies. In V. Villanueva & K. L. Arola (Eds.), *Cross-talk in comp theory* (3rd ed., pp. 459-466). National Council of Teachers of English.
- Blizzard Entertainment. (2004). *World of warcraft*. Blizzard Entertainment.
- Bogost, I. (2007). *Persuasive games: The expressive power of videogames*. MIT Press.
- Carnes, M. (2014). *Minds on fire: How role-immersion games transform college*. Harvard University Press.
- Colby, R. S. & Colby, R. (2008). A pedagogy of play: Integrating computer games into the writing classroom. *Computers and Composition*, 25, pp. 300-312.
- Consalvo, M. (2009). There is no magic circle. *Games and Culture*, 4(4), pp. 408-417.
- Copier, M. (2005, June 16). Connecting worlds. Fantasy role-playing games, ritual acts and the magic circle [Conference paper]. *Proceedings of the DiGRA International Conference*, Vancouver, Canada. <http://www.digra.org/wp-content/uploads/digital-library/06278.50594.pdf>
- Coxwell-Teague, D. & Lunsford, R. F. (2014). Setting the table: Composition in the last half of the twentieth century. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. F. Lunsford (Eds.), *First year composition: From theory to practice*. Parlor Press.

- Faigley, L., Cherry, R., Jolliffe, D., & Skinner, A. (1985). *Assessing writers' knowledge and processes of composing*. Praeger.
- Gee, J. P. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Glazer, K. (2015). *Imagining a constructionist game-based pedagogical model: Using tabletop role-playing game creation to enhance literature education in high school English classes* (Publication No. 3731117) [Doctoral dissertation, Pepperdine University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Gygax, G. (1974). *Dungeons & dragons*. Tactical Studies Rules, Inc.
- Hammer, J., To, A., Schrier, K., Bowman, S. L., & Kaufman, G. (2018). Learning and role-playing games. In J. P. Zagal & S. Deterding (Eds.), *Role-playing game studies: Transmedia foundations*, pp. 283-299. Taylor & Francis.
- Henricks, T. S. (2014). Play as self-realization: Toward a general theory of play. *American Journal of Play*, 6(2), pp. 190-213.
- Huizinga, J. (1949). *Homo ludens*. Random House.
- Johnson, M. S. S. (2012). Authoring avatars: Gaming, reading, and writing identities. In K. L. Arola & A. F. Wysocki (Eds.), *Composing (media) = composing (embodiment): Bodies, technologies, writing, the teaching of writing*, (pp. 60-71). State University Press.
- Mathieu, P. (2014). A guiding question, some primary research, and a dash of rhetorical awareness. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. F. Lunsford (Eds.), *First year composition: From theory to practice*. Parlor Press.

- Mäyrä, F. (2008). *An introduction to games studies: Games in culture*. SAGE.
- Murray, D. (1972). Teaching writing as a process not product. In V. Villanueva & K. L. Arola (Eds.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader*, (3rd ed., pp. 3-6). National Council of Teachers of English.
- Ostenson, J. (2013). Exploring the boundaries of narrative: Video games in the English classroom. *The English Journal*, 102(6), pp. 71-78.
- Papert, S. & Harel, I. (1991). *Constructionism*. Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Pierce, L. M. (2008). Facilitating positive trauma in both service-learning and traditional classroom contact zones. *Modern Language Studies*, 37(2), pp. 65-85.
- Roman, S. & Wells, K. (2019). *Lessons*. Teaching with Dungeons and Dragons.
- Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (2003). *Rules of play: Game design fundamentals*. MIT Press.
- Shipka, J. (2009). Negotiating rhetorical, material, methodological, and technological difference: Evaluating multimodal designs. *College Composition and Communication*, 61(1), pp. 343-366.
- Shipka, J. (2014). Beyond text and talk: A multimodal approach to first-year composition. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. F. Lunsford (Eds.), *First year composition: From theory to practice*. Parlor Press.
- Sierra, W. (2019). Cs the day: The trading card game. *OneShot: A Journal of Critical Play and Games*, 1.
- Stuart, C. (2019). Roll for student initiative. *OneShot: A Journal of Critical Play and Games*, 1.
- Sutton-Smith, B. (1997). *The ambiguity of play*. Harvard University Press.

- Trimbur, J. (1989). Consensus and difference in collaborative learning. In V. Villanueva & K. L. Arola (Eds.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader*, (3rd ed., pp. 441-458). National Council of Teachers of English.
- Weisser, C. R. (2002). *Moving beyond academic discourse: Composition studies and the public sphere*. Southern Illinois University Press.
- Wizards of the Coast. (2016, January 12). Systems Reference Document. *Dungeons & Dragons*.
<https://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/systems-reference-document-srd>
- Yancey, K. B., & McElroy, S. J. (2017). Assembling composition: An introduction. *Assembling composition* (pp. 3-25). National Council of Teachers of English.
- Yancey, K. B. (2014). Attempting the impossible: Designing a first-year composition course. In D. Coxwell-Teague & R. F. Lunsford (Eds.), *First year composition: From theory to practice*. Parlor Press.
- Yancey, K. B. (2004). Made not only in words: Composition in a new key. In V. Villanueva & K. L. Arola (Eds.), *Cross-talk in comp theory: A reader*, (3rd ed., pp. 791-826). National Council of Teachers of English.