



PREV CHAPTER

CH. 1: PLAYING THE GAME

## Introduction: Welcome to Adventure

This story began 50 years ago, and you're part of it. In the 1970s, Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson created a game of make-believe that fused rules with storytelling. There'd never been anything like it: a game in which each player made their own fantasy character and teamed up with their friends to go on quests. One person served as the narrator and referee—the Dungeon Master—and did everything they could to challenge and delight the other players. That game was, of course, the first version of Dungeons & Dragons, and you're now reading its latest version.

Over the decades, millions of people have played D&D, and scores of writers, game designers, and artists have made their mark on it through its various editions. When our team released the current edition in 2014, we were humbled by how many of you loved it. This revised version of it is a salute to all of you—those of you who've been playing D&D for years, those of you who've contributed to the game through your feedback, and those of you who are about to experience the joy of playing it for the first time.

As a teenager, I met both Gary and Dave. I even spent an entire day with Gary, and we did what all D&D fans do: share stories about our adventures in the D&D multiverse. I invite you to embark on such adventures anew. Share as much laughter as you can with your friends. Use only the rules that serve your fun, and always follow your group's bliss. So many people have been enjoying the magic of D&D for half a century. Let's keep it blazing for another 50 years!

—Jeremy Crawford

Are you ready to embark on fantasy adventures with your friends? Dungeons & Dragons invites you to play imaginary adventurers who delve into dungeons and other perilous locations together, face fearsome foes such as dragons, and build friendships forged amid fantastical dangers.

Fueled by imagination and rules, D&D invites you to adopt a fantasy persona—a mighty Fighter, a cunning Rogue, a faithful Cleric, a magical Wizard, or something else—and then solve problems, fight monsters, and visit wondrous places.

There's no winning and losing in D&D, at least not the way those terms are usually understood. Together you and friends create an exciting story of adventurers who confront perils. Sometimes an adventurer might come to a tragic end. Even so, the other adventurers can search for powerful magic to revive their fallen comrade, or the character's player might create a new character to carry on. No matter what happens, if everyone has a good time and creates a memorable story, they all win.

## What You Need

Here's what you need to play D&D with one or more friends (a typical group has five people):

**Dungeon Master.** One person takes on the role of the Dungeon Master (DM), the game's lead storyteller and referee. The DM creates adventures for the players' characters, who navigate its hazards and decide which paths to explore. The DM also narrates what they experience and plays the friends and foes they meet along the way. Even though the DM challenges the adventurers, the DM always strives to delight the whole group.

**Players.** Each player creates an adventurer who teams up with the other players' adventurers. Working together, the group might explore a dark dungeon, a ruined city, a haunted castle, a lost temple, a lava-filled mountain, or another location described by the DM. The adventurers also solve puzzles, talk with other characters, battle fantastic monsters, and discover magic items and other treasure—all while supporting each other's fun.

### LEARN BY WATCHING

A great way to learn the basics of D&D is to watch people play it. The Internet offers videos of D&D play that show off the tremendous range of possibilities the game offers. As you watch, pay attention to the ways that some players help make the game fun for everyone in their group. The only audience you need to entertain when you're playing D&D is yourself and your group.

You also need these resources, either in physical form or on [DnDBeyond.com](#):

**Player's Handbook.** This book is your essential reference for the game's rules, and it guides you through making an adventurer of your own.

**Dungeon Master's Guide** and **Monster Manual**. The first of these books guides the DM through creating and running adventures, and the second holds hundreds of monsters to fill those adventures.

**Dice.** You need a set of polyhedral dice (shown in [chapter 1](#)). You can find dice like these in game stores and from online retailers. Dice-rolling apps are also available.

**Character Sheet.** To keep track of important information about your character, you need a character sheet, which can be as simple as a piece of paper you write notes on or as feature-rich as a [digital record](#).

The DM might also find these accessories useful:

**DM Screen.** Many DMs like to use a screen to shield their notes and dice rolls from players. It's bad manners to peek over the screen!

**Miniatures and Battle Grid.** Some DMs use a battle grid and miniatures to run combat encounters, since they help everyone visualize the action. A battle grid can be anything marked out in 1-inch squares, from disposable sheets of paper to poster maps. And miniatures range from simple tokens to detailed figurines. Online maps and miniatures are also available, including on [DnDBeyond.com](#).

## Using This Book

Here's what you'll find in this book:

**Chapter 1: Playing the Game.** The [first chapter](#) explains the fundamentals of the game, with examples to help you understand how to play.

**Chapter 2: Creating a Character.** [Chapter 2](#) walks you through the steps of character creation.

**Chapter 3: Character Classes.** Characters' capabilities are largely determined by class, such as Fighter or Wizard. [Chapter 3](#) offers twelve classes to choose from, along with forty-eight subclasses.

**Chapter 4: Character Origins.** Background and species are key elements in defining a character's origin, which further shapes the character's abilities beyond the choice of class. Background and species options are presented in [chapter 4](#).

**Chapter 5: Feats.** The feats in [chapter 5](#) are special features that characters gain as part of their background and class.

**Chapter 6: Equipment.** Armor, weapons, and adventuring gear are found in [chapter 6](#).

**Chapter 7: Spells.** This [chapter](#) contains descriptions of the spells that spellcasters can cast.

**Appendix A: The Multiverse.** [Here](#) you'll find an overview of the magical multiverse where D&D adventures take place.

**Appendix B: Creature Stat Blocks.** This [appendix](#) brims with game information for creatures that certain characters can befriend or transform into.

**Appendix C: Rules Glossary.** The game's main rules terminology is summarized in this [appendix](#), making it an invaluable reference during play.

## Worlds of Adventure

The worlds of D&D glimmer with magic, monsters, and spectacular adventure. Launching from a foundation of medieval fantasy, these worlds soar with possibilities beyond those of our reality.

D&D worlds exist in a multiverse and are connected to one another and to other planes of existence. Some of the worlds have been published as official D&D settings, including the Greyhawk, Forgotten Realms, Dragonlance, Spelljammer, Planescape, Dark Sun, Eberron, and Ravenloft settings. Alongside these worlds are thousands more, created by generations of D&D players for their own games. Amid the richness of the multiverse, you might create a world of your own.

The worlds of the multiverse share characteristics, but each world is set apart by its own history and geography. Your DM might set a campaign on one of these worlds or on a world of their own invention. Because there is so much variety among D&D worlds, check with your DM about the world of your upcoming adventures.

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2024 VERSION?

This is the 2024 version of the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*. If you've read the [2014 version](#), much of this book will feel familiar, since the fundamental rules of the game are the same. But the book contains many new or redesigned elements, and the versions of things in this book replace versions from older books. Here are highlights:

**Streamlined Rules:** The game's rules have been streamlined and are now supported by a [rules glossary](#).

**Easier Character Creation:** Using [chapter 2](#), making a character is easier than ever before.

**Enhanced Classes:** In [chapter 3](#), every class and subclass has been enhanced with new options.

**Reimagined Origins:** Explored in [chapter 4](#), a character's origin is now defined by background and species, each of which has been redesigned.

**Expanded Feats:** In [chapter 5](#), feats have been redesigned, with many feats added.

**Upgraded Weapons, Tools, and Crafting:** Mastery properties transform how weapon wielders use their weapons, and every character can enjoy new tool and crafting rules in [chapter 6](#).

**Dazzling Spells:** [Chapter 7](#) bursts with new spells and old ones that have been enhanced.

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