

= Dungeons & Dragons =

Dungeons & Dragons (abbreviated as D & D or DnD) is a fantasy tabletop role @-@ playing game (RPG) originally designed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson , and first published in 1974 by Tactical Studies Rules , Inc . (TSR) . The game has been published by Wizards of the Coast (now a subsidiary of Hasbro) since 1997 . It was derived from miniature wargames with a variation of the Chainmail game serving as the initial rule system . D & D 's publication is commonly recognized as the beginning of modern role @-@ playing games and the role @-@ playing game industry .

D & D departs from traditional wargaming and assigns each player a specific character to play instead of a military formation . These characters embark upon imaginary adventures within a fantasy setting . A Dungeon Master serves as the game 's referee and storyteller , while maintaining the setting in which the adventures occur and playing the role of the inhabitants . The characters form a party that interacts with the setting 's inhabitants (and each other) . Together they solve dilemmas , engage in battles and gather treasure and knowledge . In the process the characters earn experience points to become increasingly powerful over a series of sessions .

The early success of Dungeons & Dragons led to a proliferation of similar game systems . Despite this competition , D & D remains the market leader in the role @-@ playing game industry . In 1977 , the game was split into two branches : the relatively rules @-@ light game system of Dungeons & Dragons and the more structured , rules @-@ heavy game system of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (abbreviated as AD & D or ADnD) . AD & D 2nd Edition was published in 1989 . In 2000 , the original line of the game was discontinued and the AD & D version was renamed Dungeons & Dragons with the release of its 3rd edition with a new system . These rules formed the basis of the d20 System which is available under the Open Game License (OGL) for use by other publishers . Dungeons & Dragons version 3 @.@ 5 was released in June 2003 , with a (non @-@ OGL) 4th edition in June 2008 . A 5th edition was released during the second half of 2014 .

As of 2004 , Dungeons & Dragons remained the best @-@ known and best @-@ selling role @-@ playing game , with an estimated 20 million people having played the game and more than US \$ 1 billion in book and equipment sales . The game has been supplemented by many pre @-@ made adventures as well as commercial campaign settings suitable for use by regular gaming groups . Dungeons & Dragons is known beyond the game for other D & D @-@ branded products , references in popular culture and some of the controversies that have surrounded it , particularly a moral panic in the 1980s falsely linking it to Satanism and suicide . The game has won multiple awards and has been translated into many languages beyond the original English .

= = Play overview = =

Dungeons & Dragons is a structured yet open @-@ ended role @-@ playing game . It is normally played indoors with the participants seated around a tabletop . Typically , each player controls only a single character , which represents an individual in a fictional setting . When working together as a group , these player characters (PCs) are often described as a " party " of adventurers , with each member often having their own area of specialty which contributes to the success of the whole . During the course of play , each player directs the actions of their character and their interactions with other characters in the game . This activity is performed through the verbal impersonation of the characters by the players , while employing a variety of social and other useful cognitive skills , such as logic , basic mathematics and imagination . A game often continues over a series of meetings to complete a single adventure , and longer into a series of related gaming adventures , called a " campaign " .

The results of the party 's choices and the overall storyline for the game are determined by the Dungeon Master (DM) according to the rules of the game and the DM 's interpretation of those rules . The DM selects and describes the various non @-@ player characters (NPCs) that the party encounters , the settings in which these interactions occur , and the outcomes of those encounters based on the players ' choices and actions . Encounters often take the form of battles with " monsters " ? a generic term used in D & D to describe potentially hostile beings such as animals ,

aberrant beings , or mythical creatures . The game 's extensive rules ? which cover diverse subjects such as social interactions , magic use , combat , and the effect of the environment on PCs ? help the DM to make these decisions . The DM may choose to deviate from the published rules or make up new ones if they feel it is necessary .

The most recent versions of the game 's rules are detailed in three core rulebooks : The Player 's Handbook , the Dungeon Master 's Guide and the Monster Manual .

The only items required to play the game are the rulebooks , a character sheet for each player , and a number of polyhedral dice . Many players also use miniature figures on a grid map as a visual aid , particularly during combat . Some editions of the game presume such usage . Many optional accessories are available to enhance the game , such as expansion rulebooks , pre @-@ designed adventures and various campaign settings .

= = = Game mechanics = = =

Before the game begins , each player creates their player character and records the details (described below) on a character sheet . First , a player determines their character 's ability scores , which consist of Strength , Constitution , Dexterity , Intelligence , Wisdom , and Charisma . Each edition of the game has offered differing methods of determining these statistics . The player then chooses a race (species) such as human or elf , a character class (occupation) such as fighter or wizard , an alignment (a moral and ethical outlook) , and other features to round out the character 's abilities and backstory , which have varied in nature through differing editions .

During the game , players describe their PC 's intended actions , such as punching an opponent or picking a lock , and converse with the DM , who then describes the result or response . Trivial actions , such as picking up a letter or opening an unlocked door , are usually automatically successful . The outcomes of more complex or risky actions are determined by rolling dice . Factors contributing to the outcome include the character 's ability scores , skills and the difficulty of the task . In circumstances where a character does not have control of an event , such as when a trap or magical effect is triggered or a spell is cast , a saving throw can be used to determine whether the resulting damage is reduced or avoided . In this case the odds of success are influenced by the character 's class , levels and ability scores .

As the game is played , each PC changes over time and generally increases in capability . Characters gain (or sometimes lose) experience , skills and wealth , and may even alter their alignment or gain additional character classes . The key way characters progress is by earning experience points (XP) , which happens when they defeat an enemy or accomplish a difficult task . Acquiring enough XP allows a PC to advance a level , which grants the character improved class features , abilities and skills . XP can be lost in some circumstances , such as encounters with creatures that drain life energy , or by use of certain magical powers that come with an XP cost .

Hit points (HP) are a measure of a character 's vitality and health and are determined by the class , level and constitution of each character . They can be temporarily lost when a character sustains wounds in combat or otherwise comes to harm , and loss of HP is the most common way for a character to die in the game . Death can also result from the loss of key ability scores or character levels . When a PC dies , it is often possible for the dead character to be resurrected through magic , although some penalties may be imposed as a result . If resurrection is not possible or not desired , the player may instead create a new PC to resume playing the game .

= = = Adventures , campaigns , and modules = = =

A typical Dungeons & Dragons game consists of an " adventure " , which is roughly equivalent to a single story . The DM can either design an adventure on their own , or follow one of the many pre @-@ made adventures (also known as " modules ") that have been published throughout the history of Dungeons & Dragons . Published adventures typically include a background story , illustrations , maps and goals for PCs to achieve . Some include location descriptions and handouts . Although a small adventure entitled " Temple of the Frog " was included in the Blackmoor rules

supplement in 1975 , the first stand @-@ alone D & D module published by TSR was 1978 's Steading of the Hill Giant Chief , written by Gygax .

A linked series of adventures is commonly referred to as a " campaign " . The locations where these adventures occur , such as a city , country , planet or an entire fictional universe , are referred to as " campaign settings " or " world " . D & D settings are based in various fantasy genres and feature different levels and types of magic and technology . Popular commercially published campaign settings for Dungeons & Dragons include Greyhawk , Dragonlance , Forgotten Realms , Mystara , Spelljammer , Ravenloft , Dark Sun , Planescape , Birthright , and Eberron . Alternatively , DMs may develop their own fictional worlds to use as campaign settings .

= = = Miniature figures = = =

The wargames from which Dungeons & Dragons evolved used miniature figures to represent combatants . D & D initially continued the use of miniatures in a fashion similar to its direct precursors . The original D & D set of 1974 required the use of the Chainmail miniatures game for combat resolution . By the publication of the 1977 game editions , combat was mostly resolved verbally . Thus miniatures were no longer required for game play , although some players continued to use them as a visual reference .

In the 1970s , numerous companies began to sell miniature figures specifically for Dungeons & Dragons and similar games . Licensed miniature manufacturers who produced official figures include Grenadier Miniatures (1980 ? 1983) , Citadel Miniatures (1984 ? 1986) , Ral Partha , and TSR itself . Most of these miniatures used the 25 mm scale .

Periodically , Dungeons & Dragons has returned to its wargaming roots with supplementary rules systems for miniatures @-@ based wargaming . Supplements such as Battlesystem (1985 & 1989) and a new edition of Chainmail (2001) provided rule systems to handle battles between armies by using miniatures .

= = Game history = =

= = = Edition history = = =

Dungeons & Dragons has gone through several revisions . Parallel versions and inconsistent naming practices can make it difficult to distinguish between the different editions .

= = = = Original game = = = =

The original Dungeons & Dragons , now referred to as OD & D , was a small box set of three booklets published in 1974 . It was amateurish in production and assumed the player was familiar with wargaming . Nevertheless , it grew rapidly in popularity , first among wargamers and then expanding to a more general audience of college and high school students . Roughly 1 @, @ 000 copies of the game were sold in the first year followed by 3 @, @ 000 in 1975 , and much more in the following years . This first set went through many printings and was supplemented with several official additions , such as the original Greyhawk and Blackmoor supplements (both 1975) , as well as magazine articles in TSR 's official publications and many fanzines .

= = = = Two @-@ pronged strategy = = = =

In 1977 , TSR created the first element of a two @-@ pronged strategy that would divide the D & D game for nearly two decades . A Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set boxed edition was introduced that cleaned up the presentation of the essential rules , made the system understandable to the general public , and was sold in a package that could be stocked in toy stores . Also in 1977 , the first part of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD & D) was published , which brought together the various

published rules , options and corrections , then expanded them into a definitive , unified game for hobbyist gamers . TSR marketed them as an introductory game for new players and a more complex game for experienced ones ; the Basic Set directed players who exhausted the possibilities of that game to switch to the advanced rules .

As a result of this parallel development , the basic game included many rules and concepts which contradicted comparable ones in AD & D. John Eric Holmes , the editor of the basic game , preferred a lighter tone with more room for personal improvisation . AD & D , on the other hand , was designed to create a tighter , more structured game system than the loose framework of the original game . Between 1977 and 1979 , three hardcover rulebooks , commonly referred to as the " core rulebooks " , were released : the Player 's Handbook (PHB) , the Dungeon Master 's Guide (DMG) , and the Monster Manual (MM) . Several supplementary books were published throughout the 1980s , notably *Unearthed Arcana* (1985) that included a large number of new rules . Confusing matters further , the original D & D boxed set remained in publication until 1979 , since it remained a healthy seller for TSR .

= = = = Revised editions = = = =

In the 1980s , the rules for Advanced Dungeons & Dragons and " basic " Dungeons & Dragons remained separate , each developing along different paths .

In 1981 , the basic version of Dungeons & Dragons was revised by Tom Moldvay to make it even more novice @-@ friendly . It was promoted as a continuation of the original D & D tone , whereas AD & D was promoted as advancement of the mechanics . An accompanying Expert Set , originally written by David " Zeb " Cook , allowed players to continue using the simpler ruleset beyond the early levels of play . In 1983 , revisions of those sets by Frank Mentzer were released , revising the presentation of the rules to a more tutorial format . These were followed by Companion (1983) , Master (1985) , and Immortals (1986) sets . Each set covered game play for more powerful characters than the previous . The first four sets were later compiled as a single hardcover book , the *Dungeons & Dragons Rules Cyclopedia* (1991) , along with a new introductory boxed set .

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition was published in 1989 , again as three core rulebooks ; the primary designer was David " Zeb " Cook . The Monster Manual was replaced by the *Monstrous Compendium* , a loose @-@ leaf binder that was subsequently replaced by the hardcover *Monstrous Manual* in 1993 . In 1995 , the core rulebooks were slightly revised , although still referred to by TSR as the 2nd Edition , and a series of Player 's Option manuals were released as optional rulebooks .

The release of AD & D2 deliberately excluded some aspects of the game that had attracted negative publicity . References to demons and devils , sexually suggestive artwork , and playable , evil @-@ aligned character types ? such as assassins and half @-@ orcs ? were removed . The edition moved away from a theme of 1960s and 1970s " sword and sorcery " fantasy fiction to a mixture of medieval history and mythology . The rules underwent minor changes , including the addition of non @-@ weapon proficiencies ? skill @-@ like abilities that originally appeared in 1st Edition supplements . The game 's magic spells were divided into schools and spheres . A major difference was the promotion of various game settings beyond that of traditional fantasy . This included blending fantasy with other genres , such as horror (*Ravenloft*) , science fiction (*Spelljammer*) , and apocalyptic (*Dark Sun*) , as well as alternative historical and non @-@ European mythological settings .

= = = = Wizards of the Coast = = = =

In 1997 , a near @-@ bankrupt TSR was purchased by Wizards of the Coast . Following three years of development , Dungeons & Dragons 3rd edition was released in 2000 . The new release folded the Basic and Advanced lines back into a single unified game . It was the largest revision of the D & D rules to date , and served as the basis for a multi @-@ genre role @-@ playing system designed around 20 @-@ sided dice , called the d20 System . The 3rd Edition rules were designed

to be internally consistent and less restrictive than previous editions of the game , allowing players more flexibility to create the characters they wanted to play . Skills and feats were introduced into the core rules to encourage further customization of characters . The new rules standardized the mechanics of action resolution and combat . In 2003 , Dungeons & Dragons v.3.5 was released as a revision of the 3rd Edition rules . This release incorporated hundreds of rule changes , mostly minor , and expanded the core rulebooks .

In early 2005 , Wizards of the Coast 's R & D team started to develop Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition , prompted mainly by the feedback obtained from the D & D playing community and a desire to make the game faster , more intuitive , and with a better play experience than under the 3rd Edition . The new game was developed through a number of design phases spanning from May 2005 until its release . Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition was announced at Gen Con in August 2007 , and the initial three core books were released June 6 , 2008 . 4th Edition streamlined the game into a simplified form and introduced numerous rules changes . Many character abilities were restructured into " Powers " . These altered the spell @-@ using classes by adding abilities that could be used at will , per encounter , or per day . Likewise , non @-@ magic @-@ using classes were provided with parallel sets of options . Software tools , including player character and monster building programs , became a major part of the game .

On January 9 , 2012 , Wizards of the Coast announced that it was working on a 5th edition of the game . The company planned to take suggestions from players and let them playtest the rules . Public playtesting began on May 24 , 2012 . At Gen Con 2012 in August , Mike Mearls , lead developer for 5th Edition , said that Wizards of the Coast had received feedback from more than 75 @,@ 000 playtesters , but that the entire development process would take two years , adding , " I can 't emphasize this enough ... we 're very serious about taking the time we need to get this right . " The release of the 5th Edition , coinciding with D & D 's 40th anniversary , occurred in the second half of 2014 .

= = = Acclaim and influence = = =

The game had more than three million players around the world by 1981 , and copies of the rules were selling at a rate of about 750 @,@ 000 per year by 1984 . Beginning with a French language edition in 1982 , Dungeons & Dragons has been translated into many languages beyond the original English . By 2004 , consumers had spent more than US \$ 1 billion on Dungeons & Dragons products and the game had been played by more than 20 million people . As many as six million people played the game in 2007 .

The various editions of Dungeons & Dragons have won many Origins Awards , including All Time Best Roleplaying Rules of 1977 , Best Roleplaying Rules of 1989 , and Best Roleplaying Game of 2000 for the three flagship editions of the game . Both Dungeons & Dragons and Advanced Dungeons & Dragons are Origins Hall of Fame Games inductees as they were deemed sufficiently distinct to merit separate inclusion on different occasions . The independent Games magazine placed Dungeons & Dragons on their Games 100 list from 1980 through 1983 , then entered the game into the magazine 's Hall of Fame in 1984 .

Dungeons & Dragons was the first modern role @-@ playing game and it established many of the conventions that have dominated the genre . Particularly notable are the use of dice as a game mechanic , character record sheets , use of numerical attributes and gamemaster @-@ centered group dynamics . Within months of Dungeons & Dragons 's release , new role @-@ playing game writers and publishers began releasing their own role @-@ playing games , with most of these being in the fantasy genre . Some of the earliest other role @-@ playing games inspired by D & D include Tunnels & Trolls (1975) , Empire of the Petal Throne (1975) , and Chivalry & Sorcery (1976) .

The role @-@ playing movement initiated by D & D would lead to release of the science fiction game Traveller (1977) , the fantasy game RuneQuest (1978) , and subsequent game systems such as Chaosium 's Call of Cthulhu (1981) , Champions (1982) , GURPS (1986) , and Vampire : The Masquerade (1991) . Dungeons & Dragons and the games it influenced fed back into the genre 's origin ? miniatures wargames ? with combat strategy games like Warhammer Fantasy

Battles . D & D also had a large impact on modern video games .

Director Jon Favreau credits Dungeons & Dragons with giving him " ... a really strong background in imagination , storytelling , understanding how to create tone and a sense of balance . "

= = = Licensing = = =

Early in the game 's history , TSR took no action against small publishers ' production of D & D compatible material , and even licensed Judges Guild to produce D & D materials for several years , such as City State of the Invincible Overlord . This attitude changed in the mid @-@ 1980s when TSR took legal action to try to prevent others from publishing compatible material . This angered many fans and led to resentment by the other gaming companies . Although TSR took legal action against several publishers in an attempt to restrict third @-@ party usage , it never brought any court cases to completion , instead settling out of court in every instance . TSR itself ran afoul of intellectual property law in several cases .

With the launch of Dungeons & Dragons 's 3rd Edition , Wizards of the Coast made the d20 System available under the Open Game License (OGL) and d20 System trademark license . Under these licenses , authors were free to use the d20 System when writing games and game supplements . The OGL and d20 Trademark License made possible new games , some based on licensed products like Star Wars , and new versions of older games , such as Call of Cthulhu .

With the release of the fourth edition , Wizards of the Coast has introduced its Game System License , which represents a significant restriction compared to the very open policies embodied by the OGL . In part as a response to this , some publishers (such as Paizo Publishing with its Pathfinder Roleplaying Game) who previously produced materials in support of the D & D product line , have decided to continue supporting the 3rd Edition rules , thereby competing directly with Wizards of the Coast . Others , such as Kenzer & Company , are returning to the practice of publishing unlicensed supplements and arguing that copyright law does not allow Wizards of the Coast to restrict third @-@ party usage .

During the 2000s , there has been a trend towards reviving and recreating older editions of D & D , known as the Old School Revival . Game systems based on earlier editions of D & D. Castles & Crusades (2004) , by Troll Lord Games , is a reimagining of early editions by streamlining rules from OGL . This in turn inspired the creation of " retro @-@ clones " , games which more closely recreate the original rule sets , using material placed under the OGL along with non @-@ copyrightable mechanical aspects of the older rules to create a new presentation of the games .

= = = Controversy and notoriety = = =

At various times in its history , Dungeons & Dragons has received negative publicity , in particular from some Christian groups , for alleged promotion of such practices as devil worship , witchcraft , suicide , and murder , and for the presence of naked breasts in drawings of female humanoids in the original AD & D manuals (mainly monsters such as harpies , succubi , etc .) . These controversies led TSR to remove many potentially controversial references and artwork when releasing the 2nd Edition of AD & D. Many of these references , including the use of the names " devils " and " demons " , were reintroduced in the 3rd edition . The moral panic over the game led to problems for fans of D & D who faced social ostracism , unfair treatment , and false association with the occult and Satanism , regardless of an individual fan 's actual religious affiliation and beliefs .

Dungeons & Dragons has been the subject of rumors regarding players having difficulty separating fantasy from reality , even leading to psychotic episodes . The most notable of these was the saga of James Dallas Egbert III , the facts of which were fictionalized in the novel Mazes and Monsters and later made into a TV movie . The game was blamed for some of the actions of Chris Pritchard , who was convicted in 1990 of murdering his stepfather . Research by various psychologists , the first being that of Armando Simon , has concluded that no harmful effects are related to the playing of D & D.

The game 's commercial success was a factor that led to lawsuits regarding distribution of royalties

between original creators Gygax and Arneson . Gygax later became embroiled in a political struggle for control of TSR which culminated in a court battle and Gygax 's decision to sell his ownership interest in the company in 1985 .

= = Related products = =

D & D 's commercial success has led to many other related products , including Dragon Magazine , Dungeon Magazine , an animated television series , a film series , an official role @-@ playing soundtrack , novels , and computer games such as the MMORPG Dungeons & Dragons Online . Hobby and toy stores sell dice , miniatures , adventures , and other game aids related to D & D and its game offspring .

= = In popular culture = =

D & D grew in popularity through the late 1970s and 1980s . Numerous games , films , and cultural references based on D & D or D & D @-@ like fantasies , characters or adventures have been ubiquitous since the end of the 1970s . D & D players are (sometimes pejoratively) portrayed as the epitome of geekdom , and have become the basis of much geek and gamer humor and satire . Famous D & D players include Pulitzer Prize winning author Junot Díaz , professional basketball player Tim Duncan , comedian Stephen Colbert , and actors Vin Diesel and Robin Williams . D & D and its fans have been the subject of spoof films , including Fear of Girls and The Gamers : Dorkness Rising .