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## What Is D&D?

This is the **Dungeons & Dragons** Roleplaying Game, the game that defines the genre and has set the standard for fantasy roleplaying for more than 30 years.

**D&D** is an imaginative, social experience that engages players in a rich fantasy world filled with larger-than-life heroes, deadly monsters, and diverse settings. As a hobby game, **D&D** is an ongoing activity to which players might devote hours of their time—much like a weekly poker game—getting together with friends on a regular basis for weeks, months, or even years.



Players create heroic fantasy characters -- mighty warriors, stealthy rogues, or powerful wizards -- which they guide through an ongoing series of adventures, working together to defeat monsters and other challenges and growing in power, glory, and achievement. The game offers endless possibilities and a multitude of choices . . . more choices than even the most sophisticated computer game, because you can do whatever you can imagine!

### What is a roleplaying game?

The **D&D** game (as a roleplaying game) is a fantasy game of your imagination. It's part acting, part storytelling, part social interaction, part war game, and part dice rolling. You and your friends create characters that develop and grow with each adventure they complete. One player is the Dungeon Master (DM). The DM controls the monsters and enemies, narrates the action, referees the game, and sets up the adventure. Together, the Dungeon Master and the players make the game come alive.

### The Players

Each player chooses the character that he or she plays. Each character has unique strengths, weakness, and abilities. For example, some characters have the power to cast spells, some have combat expertise, and others have special skills. You can even create your own character from scratch.



### The Players' Characters

Your characters star in the adventures you play, just like the heroes of a book or movie. Your character might be a savage barbarian from the frozen wastes, or a clever rogue with a quick wit and a quicker blade. You might be an archer trained in survival techniques, or a wizard who has mastered the arcane arts. As your character participates in adventures, he or she gains experience and becomes more powerful.

- [Read more about players and characters!](#)

### What can characters do in the game?

A character can try to do anything you can imagine, just as long as it fits the scene the DM describes. Depending on the situation, your character might want to listen at a door, search an area, bargain with a shopkeeper, talk to an ally, jump across a pit, move, use an item, or attack an opponent.

To do these things and more, you use the core mechanic of the game.

- [Find out more about the core mechanic.](#)

### What does the Dungeon Master do?

The Dungeon Master (DM) is the one who plays the "bad guys." He knows the secrets of the dungeon, either because he has read the dungeon that the players explore or because he created that dungeon himself.

- [Learn more about being a DM.](#)

### What should I know about D&D adventures?



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A **Dungeons & Dragons** adventure features plenty of action, exciting combat, terrifying monsters, epic challenges, and all kinds of mysteries to uncover. What lies at the heart of the dungeon? What waits around the next corner or behind the next door? Playing the roles of your characters, you and your friends face the dangers and explore a world of medieval fantasy.

- [Read more about adventures!](#)

## What do you need to play?

Your group needs these items to play **D&D**: The **D&D Basic Game** (if you've never played before); otherwise: The *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual* revised core rulebooks. (All players might want to have their own copies of the books.)

- A copy of the character sheet at the back of the *Player's Handbook* for each player.
- A battle grid. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* contains one.
- Miniatures to represent each character and the monsters that challenge them.
- A [set of dice](#) for each player. A set of dice includes at least one four-sided die (d4), four six-sided dice (d6), one eight-sided die (d8), two ten-sided dice (d10), one twelve-sided die (d12), and one twenty-sided die (d20).
- Pencils, scrap paper, and graph paper to keep notes and to map the locations your characters will explore.

## The D&D Basic Game

If you've never played before, the **D&D Basic Game** introduces you and your friends to a limitless world of imagination. It shows you how the game works and how to make the game work for you.



D&D Basic Game



Player's Handbook



Dungeon Master's Guide



Monster Manual

## The Core Rulebooks

Together, these three volumes comprise the core rules for the **Dungeons & Dragons** game:

**Player's Handbook:** The rules in the **D&D Basic Game** come from the *Player's Handbook*; the hardcover **D&D Player's Handbook** gives you many more options. The *Player's Handbook* gives you complete rules to create characters, select equipment, and engage in combat with a variety of supernatural and mythical foes.

**Dungeon Master's Guide:** This book contains information that every Dungeon Master (DM) needs to set up adventures, narrate the action, run the monsters, and referee the **Dungeons & Dragons** game.

**Monster Manual:** The *Monster Manual* contains material that players and DMs alike will find useful. With hundreds of monsters to populate all levels of dungeons, this tome also includes monster creation rules, information on playing monsters as characters, details on monster tactics, and powered-up versions of standard creatures.

**D&D Miniatures:** The **Dungeons & Dragons** game is a game of imagination, but it is also a game of tactics and strategy. Miniatures, representing characters and monsters in the game, and a battle grid provide the best way to visualize action. The game assumes the use of miniatures and a battle grid, and the rules are written from this perspective.

- [Learn more about miniatures!](#)



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