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Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Master's Guide: Roleplaying Game Core Rules, 4th Edition



Synopsis

The third of three core rulebooks for the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game. The Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game has defined the medieval fantasy genre and the tabletop RPG industry for more than 30 years. In the D&D game, players create characters that band together to explore dungeons, slay monsters, and find treasure. The 4th Edition D&D rules offer the best possible play experience by presenting exciting character options, an elegant and robust rules system, and handy storytelling tools for the Dungeon Master. The Dungeon Master's Guide gives the Dungeon Master helpful tools to build exciting encounters, adventures, and campaigns for the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game, as well as advice for running great game sessions, ready-to-use traps and non-player characters, and more. In addition, it presents a fully detailed town that can serve as a starting point for any D&D game.

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Customer Reviews

This is NOT a review of 4th Edition D&D Rules. The new Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG) is a very useful reference for new and seasoned DMs alike. Similar to the 3.5 DMG, the 4E DMG is mostly devoted to teaching GMs the black art of creating the adventure and running a game. This may come naturally to seasoned and as such the book is of somewhat less value to those folks. The book's most easily stated purpose can be found in the title of the first chapter: How To Be A DM. This theme is echoed throughout the book as it goes on to provide reams of inspiration for any DM looking to craft a memorable play experience. The first three chapters are devoted almost entirely to those folks who are DMing for their first time and want to put their best foot forward. The middling chapters provide guidelines for constructing the actual content of a game: Encounters, Adventures

and Campaigns. The final chapters focus on the rules minutiae of creating monsters, dealing with environmental hazards and construction of entire worlds. It also presents a completely developed town and area to start your players out in if you so choose. You can also use this area as a useful example when designing your own worlds. Naturally, however, even experienced DMs would be wise to take a look over this book as it contains numerous useful nuggets of information and guidelines on structuring well paced 4E adventures. It's a great refresher for any DM - especially those who think they know it all. Seasoned D&D DMs are, in my humble experience, usually very thickheaded. They have ONE way they like to run their game and they actively ignore any ideas to the contrary. Every DM has his "way" that he follows like a religion and is very closed off to change or feedback.

This would be the third major re-imagining of the DMG I've experienced and this time WotC has very nearly made the book I wished I'd read before I first became a DM. The fact that I've DM'ed for decades doesn't diminish the enjoyment of this version, either. As with 3rd edition - A sizable amount of the book is devoted to telling DMs what to expect and what is expected of them. It boils down gamers and gaming sessions to a degree that more thematically-minded players might find offensive. Seeing the framework of an encounter spelled out in stark language (e.g. "Wolf Pack-Hard: 6 skirmishers of level $n+2$ ") or having player archetypes defined (e.g. "The Actor: Be sure the Actor Doesn't Bore the other players by talking to everyone and everything [or] Justify disruptive actions as being 'in character'") might ruffle a few feathers. There will likely be (yet another round of) accusations of WotC playing to the number-crunching wing of the gaming community. Here's the thing: Boiling the game down to its essential components is not limiting - it is instructive. Seeing the numeric skeleton of a gaming session does not mean that players will feel less inclined to flesh it out. I'd argue they'd have a better understanding of what they were doing when did so. Broad brush gamers are still free to ditch the lot and just improvise. In the big picture - the advice section is not essential content for seasoned DMs, but it's not throwaway material either. The troubleshooting section is a great collection of things I've learned the hard way. It's gratifying to see those lessons in print (obviously, I'm not the only one who keeps making some of those mistakes).

I had been running a game for about a year when I picked up the 4th Edition Dungeon Master's Guide. I have to say, it improved my game tremendously, and I highly recommend it, especially to relatively new dungeon masters. Here's why. The book provided the guidance I needed without

getting in my way. No assumptions were made about my DMing style, or the style and motivations of my players. Instead, the authors recognized D&D as a flexible game played by very diverse people, and provided advice to make the game work for everyone. There is a section on the different archetypes of players and what their strengths, needs, and motivations are. I swear in my group I have one of each, and could never quite figure out how to deal with that. The DMG didn't pass judgment and say my power gamer was bad and how to force him to be more like my storyteller, it gave tips on keeping everyone happy but keeping them from stepping on each other's toes. The encounter design section not only talks about how to make balanced encounters, but also how to make them interesting. There are ideas about terrain, monster roles, and hazards that help a lot. Last night, an encounter I previously would have done as "3 goblins pop out from behind a tree and whack you with swords" turned into a flaming arrow whizzing past them, setting trees behind them on fire and scaring their horses tied to the trees. They look up in time to see another flaming arrow coming from a single but powerful-looking hobgoblin sniper high in another stand of trees, and the arrow promptly sets one of the party members on fire.

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