DUNGEON

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

By the DUNGEON *Staff*

THE GROUND RULES

With few exceptions, submitting an article to DUNGEON requires these important steps:

1. Review these guidelines.
2. Send a query.
3. Wait patiently.
4. Submit the manuscript if approved.
5. Wait patiently.

DUNGEON is the official monthly resource for DUNGEON MASTERS, the most dedicated players of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Freelance writers just like you account for much of our content, and these simple guidelines provide you with the tools needed to get your articles and adventures published in our magazine. Before you submit an idea for publication, it is absolutely critical that you review these guidelines.

The Query

Before you start writing, send us a query outlining what your adventure or article covers and how long you expect it to be. DUNGEON publishes several different types of articles, each with their own guidelines and ground rules. See the Writing Tips section of these guidelines for more information on how to improve your chances of getting published for each type of article.

Adventures: Adventures are the heart and soul of DUNGEON. Some of the finest D&D adventures ever published have appeared within our pages, which have also introduced D&D fans to folks who have gone on to become some of the most well-known and respected names in the RPG industry.

Before you submit an adventure to DUNGEON, send us a brief query via regular mail or email (we prefer email). If you email your query to us, please attach the query to the email as a Word document or a rich text file, rather than pasting it into the body of the email. Also, to help keep us organized, please submit each adventure query as a separate email. Your proposal should be 1000 words or less (about two pages) and include the following elements: a working title, an original and compelling plot, the specific character level of the adventure, the major foes faced in the adventure, information on any rewards to be gained, and an estimate of the completed adventure's length in words and number of maps.

Articles: We publish a large number of articles, ranging from the tiny (Campaign Workbook) to the titanic (Backdrops). See the Writing Tips section of these guidelines for more information on our different article types. Campaign Workbook articles do not require a query, and are probably the easiest way for a first-time author to get into the magazine. Longer articles require a query, preferably by email.

A copy of our Standard Disclosure Form is included with these guidelines. You have our permission to make as many photocopies of this form as necessary. A completed form must accompany each proposal and manuscript that you submit. You can append it to the end of the submission in the case of hard copy submissions or include a scan of a signed and completed Standard Disclosure Form with your electronic submission. If you send us the query and the SDF electronically, please attach the SDF as a separate file.

We return unread all manuscripts and adventure proposals that are not accompanied by a completed Standard Disclosure Form. You do not need to include a Standard Disclosure Form with simple email queries for non-adventure articles.

Our address for query-related matters is:

The Waiting (Part 1)

An editor should reply to your query within soon after its receipt. This initial response is either a simple rejection (if it is immediately obvious that we can't use your idea) or an acknowledgement that we have received your query. If you have not heard back after a month, please feel free to contact us again and make sure that we actually received your submission. The simple truth is that sometimes a submission gets misplaced.

Once your query makes it past the initial read, it is evaluated in detail during the next approval meeting. Approval meetings occur every few months, and in general no query receives the green light until after it has gone thorough the submissions meeting process. We try to let people know by way of our messageboards (http://paizo.com/paizo/messageboards) when the next approval meeting is coming up, so if you are curious about the status of queries in general that is a good place to start. Questions about specific queries should always be emailed to us directly.

The Manuscript

Manuscripts must be provided to us in electronic format, either on CD or attached to an email sent to dungeon@paizo.com. Please follow these simple rules:

1. Download the *DUNGEON* style sheets file from paizo.com/dungeon and write your manuscript using the styles found therein. This file should work with most versions of Microsoft Word. If you do not have Microsoft Word, provide your manuscript in rich text format.

2. On the first page of your manuscript, include your name, current email address, and home address. Also include the title of the submission. If the submission is intended for a specific section of the magazine, note that on the first page as well. IMPORTANT: Put the total word count somewhere conspicuous on the first page. While this bit of information might not seem like a big deal to you, it is crucial to us.

3. Include your name, the submission title, and page number on every page of your manuscript.

4. At the end of your manuscript, write a 25-word personal bio (note that this only applies to adventure and backdrop manuscript submissions).

5. Spellcheck your manuscript and personally edit a printout before you send it our way. In fact, ask a friend to read over the manuscript before you send it in. Other people will catch things you've overlooked. While manuscripts do not need to be perfect, ones that require an enormous amount of editing seldom make it into the magazine.

The Waiting (Part 2)

We might need several months to evaluate of your submission. If you have not heard from us after a couple of months, feel free to inquire by email about the status of your query or submission. While you wait, please feel free to send more queries. Do not contact us by phone to ask about the status of your manuscript.

If you send hard copy queries or manuscripts (in electronic format on CD) and expect a response, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Likewise, if you absolutely require notice that the manuscript has arrived safely in our office, include a self-addressed stamped postcard with your submission. We'll throw it in the mail as soon as it arrives.

If we like your query, we'll respond with comments aimed toward helping you complete a manuscript with a good chance to make it into the magazine. We prefer to communicate by email, and writers who have access to an email account should find that the process moves much more quickly than those who are forced to rely upon regular mail.

Revisions

Even if we love your manuscript, we'll probably ask for revisions. This request usually comes in the form of a long email with change requests outlined on a numbered list. Some of these are "suggestions," while others are required changes in order to make the submission acceptable for publication.

We often ask for changes to articles to adjust style, game balance, length, or focus. Send your revision in Word or rich text format attached to an email to the editor who requested the revision, or to dungeon@paizo.com if no email address is provided. Put "Revision" in the title of your email and on the first page of the new manuscript, and give a brief description of the article in the body of the email.

When we ask for a revision, it is not a guarantee of acceptance of the article. If you are unwilling or unable to revise your work as we require, we will not print your article.

Rejection

Your submission might be deemed unacceptable, even after the revision process. We often don't have time to provide a detailed explanation of why the article didn't work for us, but we try to provide some pointers if time is available. Unfortunately, the quantity of submissions we must review each week leaves us with very little time for constructive criticism of articles we don't intend to publish. If you receive a form rejection letter, please save your submission for future inspiration and query us about new submission ideas. We never "change our minds" about articles we have already rejected, so in the face of rejection it's best to simply move on to the next idea.

We realize that rejection stinks because every member of our editorial staff has, in the past, been rejected by either *Dragon* or *Dungeon* magazines. We'll try to be gentle.

Articles are most often rejected because of poor writing quality, imprecise or incorrect game mechanics, failure to present information in the proper D&D style, poor formatting and organization, clichéd approach to topics, or difference between the query and the final article.

Rights & Payment

Any article published by *Dungeon* becomes the sole property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. We purchase all rights to any submission that makes use of Wizards of the Coast's copyrighted materials or that makes changes or additions to a product of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. We do not offer royalties on the articles we purchase; we pay a flat fee. Payments are made 30 days after publication, at a starting rate of $.05/word. Quantity of published submissions, reliability, and overall quality of submissions can push this rate considerably higher over time.

In addition to monetary payment, we send you at least one free copy of the issue containing your published work.

WRITING TIPS

Dungeon publishes a wide variety of article types. This section of the Submission Guidelines gives suggestions and guidelines tailored to specific sections of the magazine.

Queries

Writing a good query is the first step toward getting your adventure published in the magazine. No matter how brilliant or innovative your idea may be, if you can't communicate it coherently in 1,000 words, it will never see print in the magazine. With that in mind, here are some tips for good query writing:

- It's extremely important to get as much of the adventure itself into the query as possible. We love backstory, but we often get really into the setup for an adventure, only to arrive at the last paragraph of the query and read "then the PCs show up and make it all better." Regardless of how cool your backstory is, an adventure is not a short story. You need to condense or sacrifice background description in favor of telling us about PC involvement. It's how the adventure PLAYS that determines whether or not a proposal is something we want to pick up.
- Along those same lines, if you condense the backstory and find that the section talking about

the adventure itself is still "then the PCs go take out the bad guy," take it as a sign that the adventure itself could probably use some work. Adventures with a simple "go there/do that" plot rarely make it through. Twists, turns, and alternate ways to "win" are usually more entertaining.

- Don't presume PC actions. One of D&D's greatest draws is its ability to allow players to do anything they want. In your adventure, don't presume that the PCs are always going to follow the path you've laid out for them. Proposals heavy on themes like: "the PCs will follow the invaders back to their lair" or "the PCs will of course want to use the library" run the risk of drawing a "too leading" or "too straightforward/linear" comment from the editors. Go ahead and talk about incentives for the PCs to take various actions, but realize that being lead by the nose is rarely fun or effective.
- If you find that your adventure centers entirely around a really cool villain, with the only real plot point being "the PCs go fight the bad guy," consider shelving the adventure and submitting your antagonist as a Critical Threat instead. You'll run a far better chance of getting it published, and it'll be vastly more useful and entertaining for the readers.
- Put your best face forward. Consider what elements make your proposal exciting and a "must buy" from an editor's perspective (great story, great NPCs, great location, basically great anything) and put them up front. Let us know what makes your adventure cool, because if we have to go hunting for it, there's a good chance we'll miss it. In newspapers they call this, "burying the lede." Don't bury your lede.
- We are not your players. A lot of authors like to be sneaky about key plot elements, avoiding the big "reveal." Even if the adventure is a mystery, it shouldn't be mysterious to us. Don't hide elements of your adventure from us. Give us all the information we need to make an informed decision about whether or not to buy the module. If you don't, we're probably not going to buy it.
- Please proofread! A spellchecker will make minor fixes, but an abundance of grammatical and spelling errors makes your manuscript much less attractive and professional. Try to get others to read your submission first for clarity and correctness. Give yourself time to adequately go over the whole manuscript. This can be especially important for foreign-language contributors who must compete with native speakers.
- Along those lines, learn how to use apostrophes. Yes, we can fix them for you. We'd prefer not to, and a misuse of basic grammar and punctuation is an automatic strike against the proposal, because it means (almost no matter what) that developing the final adventure will involve more work (and hence more money) than developing a "clean" adventure. Bad apostrophe usage is a good indicator of bad grammar in general. This won't automatically sink a proposal, but it's not good. Here's a decent online primer on apostrophe usage: http://www.mantex.co.uk/samples/apo.htm
- Show, don't tell. Instead of saying "a really cool trap" or "a mind-bending puzzle," give us a QUICK idea of what it involves.
- Read recent issues of DUNGEON. Not only will this help you by showing you what kind of adventures we tend to accept, but it'll also tell you what kinds of adventures we've run too often.

Adventures

Every issue, DUNGEON features three complete DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures, one each tailored to low-level (1–5), mid-level (6–12), or high-level (13–20) parties. We publish an epic-level adventure about once a year, but this is usually by special arrangement with the editors. Due to the Adventure Paths we have been publishing recently, we need fewer high-level adventures than we once did. However, the difficulty of writing a good high-level adventure means that if you can pull it off, it will almost always be accepted.

Before you begin thinking about your adventure, carefully review these guidelines and Chapter 3: Adventures of the 3.5 DUNGEON MASTER's Guide. You'll also find it helpful to review several past issues of DUNGEON, to ensure that your query does not cover ground we've recently explored in the magazine. If we've published a half dozen adventures featuring half-dragons (and we have), it's probably a good

idea to avoid half-dragons for the time being. Examining several issues of the magazine at once is probably your best window into the tastes of our editorial team, who, after all, are the folks deciding whether or not to approve your query and ultimately publish your adventure.

Length: Our adventures typically range from 5,000 to 15,000 words in length. Occasionally, we'll publish a longer adventure or an adventure that spans multiple issues, but these are uniformly created by special arrangement with the *Dungeon* staff and are only approved for authors with a proven track record with the magazine. If you're thinking about working on your first submission, it's best to start small.

It doesn't matter if the finished manuscript comes in at exactly the word count predicted in the query, but we automatically reject any adventure manuscript that contains fewer than 5,000 or more than 15,000 words. The ideal manuscript size is 10,000 words, and hitting or coming close to that target gives your adventure a significant leg up on longer submissions.

Campaign Settings: The ideal *Dungeon* adventure works in any campaign, regardless of the DM's favored campaign setting. Accordingly, we favor adventures patterned after traditional sword & sorcery, the type of game exemplified by the three core rulebooks (the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*). The fewer setting-specific details you include in your adventure, the more useful the scenario will be to the majority of our readers. Try to confine your adventure to a relatively small area; it's far simpler for DMs to insert a single town into their campaigns than an entire kingdom.

All generic adventures should conform to the campaign rules presented in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and use the same pantheon of deities presented in the core rules. The *Player's Handbook* provides a list of D&D deities; use this list instead of creating your own deities.

In addition to generic adventures, we also publish adventures set in the Greyhawk, Forgotten Realms, and Eberron campaign settings, published by Wizards of the Coast. Such scenarios are published less frequently than generic D&D adventures, and only when excellent adventures in these settings become available.

We are not looking for unsolicited adventures designed specifically for out-of-print campaign settings (such as Mystara, Red Steel, Planescape, Dark Sun, or Ravenloft) or for third-party settings (such as Freeport, Dawnforge, the Iron Kingdoms, Kalamar, etc.).

Feel free to use material from other official sources of D&D material published by Wizards of the Coast. Books like *Complete Warrior*, *Frostburn*, and secondary monster books such as the *Fiend Folio* and *Monster Manual III* are excellent resources. If your adventure contains an official monster from a book other than the *Monster Manual*, be sure to include a complete stat block and physical description of that monster in your manuscript, since the secondary books are not required to play the adventures in *Dungeon*.

Once or twice a year, we publish an *Oriental Adventures* or *Expanded Psionics Handbook* adventure.

Maps: Group all maps at the end of your manuscript, after the last page of text. Make sure that all maps (and diagrams, if appropriate) are rendered neatly in ink. The map grid (if any) should be clearly marked without obstructing the map's legibility. Scale lines may be used for outdoor maps. Use a straight edge to draw the straight lines on your final copy. Darken solid areas (such as rock around a dungeon complex). Whenever possible, draw the furnishings or obvious features of an area. Use icons for beds, desks, ladders, trapdoors, curtains, and so forth. Try to make your icons recognizable without a map key. Refrain from painting your maps. Only use color to indicate important map features where use of plain ink does not suffice, such as to designate bodies of water, heavily forested areas bordering plains, or other such locations.

Remember internal consistency when designing maps. Inhabited areas require provisions for bringing in food, water, light, and heat, a method of disposing waste materials, and ways for the inhabitants to get around easily. Large area maps should conform to known geographical principles; note special cases. Use numerals for rooms in dungeons and other structures, numbered consecutively throughout. (Do not start over with room number 1 on a dungeon's second level.) Always check your maps against the finished text. Make sure you have described all relevant areas on the maps and have not mislabeled anything.

For electronic submissions, it's ok to include 150 dpi scans of your hand-drawn or computer-generated maps. For printed submissions, always provide clean photocopies. In either case, always,

always, always keep the original maps. Do not send us originals!

Scenarios that rely on new magic items, monsters, weapons, or prestige classes to get the reader's attention are not as interesting as scenarios that present fast-paced, exciting, enjoyable adventures that utilize elements from the three core rule books. If you create something new (such as a new magic item used by an important NPC), make sure its presence in the adventure is justified, that it is fully explained in terms of its effects in the game, and that it is reasonable and fits with the game rules.

Site-based adventures are preferable to event-based ones. Unlike event-based scenarios, which tend to rely on rigid timelines, site-based scenarios are based around interesting sites that characters can explore for one or more sessions: for example, dungeons, castles, strongholds, catacombs, ancient ruins, or cities. Adventures that present fantastic locations filled with diverse, well-thought-out encounters are ideal. For more information on designing site-based adventures, consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Elements an Adventure Should Have

Incorporating the suggestions below provides depth to your design. These suggestions allow every character class a chance to shine. They provide several alternatives to straight combat encounters. The suggestions might provide you with new ideas. Look at it as an inspirational list, not a recipe to be strictly followed.

Action

Action is fun. Action is good. Promote action. Make the players want to take action. Don't coerce characters to act; when you do, you create a split between what the players want (to go on the adventure) and what the PCs want (not to go on the adventure).

Start with action. A typical gaming group has several minutes to an hour of "preparation" at the start of a session. Once the adventure is underway, the dice should start rolling (at least figuratively) very soon.

Conclude with action. Let the actions of the PCs (not the actions of NPCs) resolve the adventure.

Reward action. Players would usually rather act than think. Build encounters that reward the players for taking the initiative. (This doesn't mean that the PCs should always win when they charge through an adventure. A fight can be rewarding to the players even if it's a big drain for the PCs.) Thinking is ok too. Some encounters should reward (or even require) thought. A good balance is an encounter that PCs can handle by brute force or that they can handle more easily with some good tactics.

Warn players when action is bad. If you're going to reward and encourage action most of the time, it's only fair to give players some warning when the PCs are coming to an encounter where "kicking open the door" is a bad idea. That way they can appreciate a "thinking" encounter as a good thinking encounter rather than stumbling into it and finding it to be a bad combat encounter.

Be careful with traps. If you sprinkle in traps randomly, the smart PC response is to take every room or area slowly and cautiously. That might be smart, but it's boring. Some hint that the characters are entering a trapped area helps the players slow down and be cautious when they need to without slowing the whole game to a crawl.

Danger

Randomness is dangerous. In any contest, an increase in randomness favors the underdog. The monsters are the underdogs because the PCs almost always win. Thus, any increase in randomness favors the monsters. These things increase randomness:

- High crit multiples (axes, scythes, picks, and so forth)
- Concealment (miss chances)
- Single, powerful creatures
- "Save or sink" powers: poison, petrification, death gaze, and the like.

Vary the danger level. Make some encounters weaker and others stronger. If the characters have a chance to recover or are likely to be fresh, you can increase the danger. If the characters are likely to be weak or if they must fight a series of encounters, be careful. Even a fight that they're certain to win at full strength can kill weakened party members or can drain them to the point at which later encounters become lethal.

Peak fights are cool. Players want to take on the big boss monster. Let them, but be careful. If

they've had to fight past guards and traps, they'll be weak by the time they face the boss. If his defenses are good, he doesn't have to be more than a single EL above the party level to be dangerous.

Don't spend time detailing encounters that are not dangerous to the PCs. 4th-level warriors are not dangerous to 12th-level PCs—it's ok to mention them if they patrol the halls of your fortress, but do not spend a lot of time talking about them.

Other Encounter Elements
- Tactical positioning of PCs/NPCs
- Encounters you can "outsmart" (or possibly bypass)
- Encounters that reward good planning
- Monsters/encounters you should probably run from
- Roleplaying encounters ("Let's make a deal…")
- Sonic attacks (for bards to counter)
- Area attacks (so rogues and monks can use evasion)
- Encounters where PCs should have to use abilities of their level (5th-level PCs can probably use magic to fly, so encounters should assume that at least one PC can fly)
- Climbing, falling, and doing stuff in high places
- Aerial attacks
- Fear (so the paladin can shine)
- Undead (for the cleric)
- Traps (for the rogue)
- Locked doors (for the rogue)
- Secret doors (for elves and the rogue)
- Normal animals (so the druid or ranger can use her wild empathy and animal-based spells)
- Darkness (and other environmental hazards)
- Use of cover and concealment
- Nonlethal damage
- Situations in which skills and feats are more applicable than spells and items
- Grappling
- Counterspelling
- Alliances (PCs with NPCs, PCs with monsters, NPCs with monsters, monsters with monsters, and so on)
- NPCs that think like PCs
- Multiclass/prestige classes
- Monsters with class levels, or advanced monsters
- Poison and disease
- Gaze attacks
- Spell enhancement (pre-cast spells on creatures)

Things To Avoid

Avoid stereotypical material. We usually reject adventures in which the heroes must:

- Rescue someone's kidnapped daughter.
- Solve a murder perpetrated by a doppelganger.
- Retrieve an ancient artifact.
- Battle a deranged wizard or sorcerer.
- Repel a simple humanoid infestation.
- Defeat an undead army.
- Prevent the "assimilation" of their town.

This list is not all-inclusive. There are many more overused plot devices that might seem new and fresh to you, but that we see many times each month. (This includes beginning your adventure in a tavern or inn. Don't do it.) We're looking for new ideas or fresh approaches to old ideas. We do not accept adventures that require evil PCs or that ask the PCs to slay good characters or monsters.

Avoid excessively linear plots that force the story toward an inevitable conclusion or "railroad" the actions of the PCs. The adventure should be flexible enough for PCs to make choices and decisions that could affect the outcome of the story. Avoid rigid timelines.

High-level adventures should keep the balance of the game in perspective and should challenge the players without damaging the DM's world set-up. Adventures that require the characters to kill deities or "save the world" are usually not accepted. Avoid adventures that propose dramatic changes to the campaign world. This includes adventures in which the fate of entire kingdoms hangs in the balance, where the world is devastated by some great cataclysm, or in which deities play active roles in the outcome of a scenario.

Tastelessness should be strictly avoided. Do not submit adventures involving the abuse or destruction of children or helpless persons, cruel mistreatment of animals, excessive gore or violence, descriptions of Satan or Satanism, or game versions of major real world religious or political figures. Explicit sex, the encouragement of substance abuse, offensive language, and bathroom humor cannot be used.

Remember that the PCs are the protagonists and central figures of the adventure. Do not use NPCs to help the player characters excessively. NPCs who step in and eliminate all opposition to the PCs, lead the PC party, and accomplish the PCs' goals for them are very dangerous to campaigns. Set up the adventure to challenge the PCs, and let them make it on their own.

Do NOT:
- Design magic items or spells that confer dodge bonuses
- Use defunct rules from previous editions (including rules that were dropped in the transition from 3.0 to 3.5)
- Create a character ability that requires an activation check to use (for example, 30% chance to succeed at something)
- Use the word "memorized" when referring to the preparation of spells; "prepared" is the correct term

Features

Although *Dungeon*'s focus remains strongly on adventures, we do publish certain types of feature articles on occasion. Most of these articles are commissioned by the staff from some of our favorite game designers, but others come straight from reader queries. We're currently accepting proposals for the following two feature types:

Backdrop: A new feature for the magazine, Backdrops present a new locale for the DM to introduce into his campaign. Backdrops can range in scope from a demiplane to a single city location, such as a tavern or temple. See "Into the Isle of Dread," in *Dungeon* #114 for one example of such a feature. Backdrops run from 5,000–10,000 words. Be specific in your query about what type of "tool" the Backdrop provides the DM (in the case of the Isle of Dread, it's a dinosaur-filled jungle island). Also include some crunchy game elements such as random encounter tables or a new monster or two. The emphasis should be on "plug-and-play," with maximum portability between campaign settings.

Cities of Adventure: These articles, such as "Hardby: City of the Scorned" (*Dungeon* #109) are essentially Backdrops, but the complex nature of a city means there are a lot more factors to consider. In your query, specify what your city "brings to the table" that will make a DM want to add it to his campaign. Also note that the finished article should include a brief appendix with up to five complete stat blocks for personages important to the city. Cities of Adventure articles range in length from 8,000–10,000 words. Before you send in a query for a City of Adventure article, take some time to answer the questions in Appendix 1 of this document.

We are currently only accepting Backdrop and City of Adventure proposals in conjunction with adventure proposals. We are not currently planning on printing any more "stand-alone" backdrops. If your adventure features an especially interesting city or location that you do not have space to detail fully in the adventure itself, a backdrop is one possibility. Due to the increased amount of space that a backdrop article consumes, especially when paired with an adventure, we generally only accept backdrop proposals from trusted authors who have a history of working with the magazine.

Campaign Workbook

Campaign Workbook articles are 1,100–1,250-word articles offering short tips and tools to help a DM with a specific part of his or her campaign. Review the Campaign Workbook sections of DUNGEON #114 forward to get a sense of what we're looking for. These are brief, fun articles meant to be read and enjoyed in a single sitting. You do not need to send a query for Campaign Workbook articles, but you do need to send a completed Standard Disclosure Form. Here are the various Campaign Workbook article sections, your submission must fit into one of the five sections of the Campaign Workbook, and be clearly labeled as such:

The Cast: Tips related to NPCs. Articles might be anything from a list of three informants and some words on the use of informants in a campaign to five complete stat blocks for archers of various levels.

The City: Suggestions to enhance city campaigning. Articles might range from a collection of encounter tables by neighborhood types to a list of a dozen guilds and related adventure hooks.

The Dungeon: Short suggestions for dungeon adventuring. Ideas might range from a discussion of how to add a three-dimensional element to make dungeon rooms more interesting to a list of 20 different pit traps.

The Journey: Tips related to wilderness adventuring. Ideas might range from a discussion of how to handle woodland ambushes to a list of adventure hooks related to wayside shrines.

Critical Threat: A brief NPC sketch. Look to issues of the magazine for tips on format. Always be able to fill in the blank in the following sentence: "In the campaign, this NPC fills the role of the _____."

APPENDIX 1: CITIES OF ADVENTURE

THIRTY QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CITY

The key to designing a compelling fantasy city is presenting a strong "sense of place." Before you start writing your Cities of Adventure submission, develop a familiarity with your locale by answering the following 30 questions.

1. Who rules the city?

2. How does the ruler maintain power?

3. What factions or personalities plot against the ruler? Why do they do so?

4. What four enemy types are common to campaigns set in this city?

5. Which local NPCs are the PCs likely to befriend? Why?

6. What three things about your city make it unique?

7. What monsters lurk in the city?

8. How powerful are the city's trade guilds?

9. Is there a wizards' guild?

10. A thieves' guild?

11. What deities have temples in the city?

12. What is the most popular religion in your city? What about your city's character makes this religion popular?

13. From whom are the PCs likely to seek healing?

14. Where will the PCs buy weapons, armor, and equipment?

15. What's the best inn/tavern in town?

16. Which tavern is most likely to be the site of a bar fight?

17. Where will the PCs buy, sell, and trade magic items?

18. How does social class affect the lives of citizens in your city?

19. What do the social classes think of each other?

20. How corrupt is the city watch? The courts?

21. How dangerous is the city at night?

22. What are the three most beautiful things in the city?

23. How does the city protect itself?

24. What does the city smell like?

25. What do the citizens do to have a good time?

26. What do the citizens fear more than anything else?

27. What would a bard like about the city?

28. What would a barbarian, druid, or ranger like about the city?

29. What would your significant other/spouse like about the city?

30. WHY DO ADVENTURERS COME TO YOUR CITY?

APPENDIX II: ADVENTURE DESIGN GUIDE

Use these guidelines and templates when designing D&D adventures. When conceptualizing your adventure, remember that we rarely print unsolicited adventures that run over 15,000 words in length, and prefer to print adventures that are about 10,000 words long. Here are some things to think about when you're getting ready to write up your adventure.

• The Adventure Background section should be no more than 5% of the total length of the adventure.

• Remember that sidebars take up more space in the magazine than their word counts would indicate. Try to keep the number of sidebars in your adventure to a minimum, and to no more than 300 words in length.

• NPCs and creatures with class levels, advanced Hit Dice, or templates take up more room than generic creatures straight out of the *Monster Manual*. If your adventure has lots of classed NPCs or advanced monsters, you need to reduce the number of encounters to compensate for the increased word count.

• A good way to estimate an adventure's length is to count up the number of encounters in the adventure. Multiply this total by 500 (a rough average for a single encounter's word count). If your dungeon map has 15 encounter areas labeled on it, you can expect the length of encounters to run at about 7,500 words. Higher-level encounter areas tend to be wordier, averaging at 750 or even 1,000 words.

• Don't forget that stat blocks for monsters and NPCs have a considerable "footprint" when it comes to word count. An average NPC stat block can run well over 300 words on its own.

Introduction (Mandatory)

The adventure's introduction should begin with a "teaser," a short paragraph that summarizes the theme and plot of your adventure and serves as a hook to catch the reader's interest. Think of the teaser as your best chance to catch a DM's eye, and come up with something representative of your adventure that encourages the reader to read the rest of it.

The second paragraph should indicate what game system the adventure utilizes (at this time, DUNGEON publishes adventures for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS only, but you should still indicate this), what level of characters the adventure is designed for, and what game world the adventure is set in. If the adventure is tied to a specific location in a world, indicate where the adventure takes place. If your adventure utilizes material from non-core books like *Complete Warrior* or *Fiend Folio*, you don't need to mention this here; simply mention usage as it appears in the text with a short sentence.

Adventure Background (Mandatory)

This section provides the DM with a clear, brief summary of events leading up to the adventure, including any pertinent historical details and villainous machinations. The main thing to keep an eye on in this section is length. If you can't present an adventure background in 500 words, it's probably too complex and should be simplified. As a general guideline, the adventure background should be no more than 5% of the adventure's total length.

Adventure Synopsis (Mandatory)

This section provides a clear, concise summary of the adventure for the DM. Outline surprises and plot twists here, not during the course of the adventure. Introduce key NPCs here, and indicate both what the central conflict of the adventure is and detail the most likely way the PCs can resolve this conflict.

Adventure Hooks (Mandatory)

This section helps DMs lead the PCs into the adventure. Although it's fine to structure the adventure so that one of these hooks is the preferred way to start the adventure, all adventures need at least three different hooks. At least one hook should be simple and straightforward ("Deliver this message to the high-priest of St. Cuthbert in Homlett"). Others can exploit alignment, class, race, or society. Hooks should not presume anything about the PCs' actions, nor should they follow the standard adventure hook that presumes they are mercenaries available to the highest bidder. The hooks don't necessarily need to be associated with the adventure's plot. Adventures for 1st-level characters should include some hooks that assume that the PCs don't yet know each other.

One adventure hook in particular we've seen quite enough of are those that have a relation or friend of a PC call for help. You should also avoid hooks that rely on the coincidence of the PCs' presence in the area for the adventure to start. The party should always have a reason to go on an adventure.

The Adventure's Encounters (Mandatory)

At the start of the adventure's encounters, you can include additional sections that detail rumors, background information the players can uncover in research or by using bardic knowledge checks, town statistics, the time of year the adventure takes place in, and other relevant bits. If the adventure is for higher-level characters, include information that can be learned by divination spells as appropriate.

The adventure itself consists of a series of planned encounters keyed to a map, timeline, or flowchart. Each encounter can include any or all of the following sections: Read-aloud Text, General Description, Creature(s), Tactics, Trap(s), Treasure, Development, and Ad-Hoc XP Adjustment. Do not include sections that are unnecessary for a given encounter. For instance, an area devoid of traps does not require a Trap section. If you find that you don't have anything to say for any of these categories, the area is not an encounter and should not be assigned an encounter number. The editors greatly dislike printing the words "This room is empty" in DUNGEON.

Each encounter should be rated with an Encounter Level (EL #) in the main encounter header, allowing the DM to quickly assess the possible threat to his or her PCs. The EL is the properly calculated CRs of all creatures and traps in a particular encounter (see page 49 of the DUNGEON MASTER's Guide). A sample encounter header would appear thus: 23. Vampire's Den (EL 13).

Certain encounters are structured so that the threats are not felt simultaneously. It's one thing if the pit trap is in the center of the room and the hill giant keeps bull rushing its enemies into the pit—calculating the total EL by using the CRs of the monster and trap is expected. But if the trap is on a chest hidden in a closet and never makes an appearance during the fight, reasonably that trap's CR should not be figured into the EL (unless its CR is higher than the monster's CR, in which case the reverse holds true). Likewise, if an encounter is designed such that NPCs initially encountered are friendly, but on a repeat visit are revealed as a threat, the EL in the encounter's main header should not give the EL based on the second visit, because it is not true for the first visit to the encounter.

Consult Appendix IV for a sample encounter written in the DUNGEON style.

Dungeon Features (Mandatory)

Some dungeons (or wilderness regions, demiplanes, and so on) have features that are common throughout. How high are the ceilings? How are rooms illuminated? What types of doors are prevalent? (This includes such information as thickness of door and the material doors are composed of, which has rule-specific implications for hit points and hardness.) What about wandering monsters? Rather than repeat this information throughout the adventure, keep the information in this section.

Read-Aloud Text (Mandatory)

This section generally precedes the other entries of an encounter, although part of the general

description might precede it if important to the encounter. The read-aloud text is meant to be read or paraphrased aloud to the players at an opportune time. It also provides the DM with a description of the room and its contents. Read-aloud text provides a bare-bones description of the encounter area; it does not make any reference to the viewer. Avoid phrases such as "you see," "as you enter the room," or other phrases that assume any action whatsoever on behalf of the players. You should also avoid including descriptions of any creatures in the room, since their activities and positions in the room often depend on multiple factors (such as if they hear the PCs coming, if it's night or day, and so on).

Read-aloud text for an encounter should only rarely run more than a few sentences. Long sections of read-aloud text are better served as player handouts.

General Description (Optional)

This section provides the DM with information on interesting features, creatures, traps, and other specifics of the encounter that play off the read-aloud text. Unusual magical or environmental effects, the room's purpose (if not obvious from the read-aloud text), explanatory text about unusual features described in the read-aloud text, and statistics for objects found in the room that are likely to be broken go into this section.

Creature(s) (Optional)

Creature the PCs encounter are described here. Provide a physical description of the monster or NPC, as well as general motivations and background info. If the creature has information to impart to the characters, include that information here, along with the creature's starting attitude and what happens if the PCs use Diplomacy, Intimidate, or magic to alter its attitude.

Include the creature's abbreviated statistics if it appears in the adventure almost exactly as it does in the *Monster Manual*. In this case, include only the number of creatures appearing, hit points, and special equipment, as well as a *Monster Manual* page number for easy reference. Full statistics for creatures should only be included if the creature is significantly different from the way it appears in the *Monster Manual* (for example, it has class levels or advanced Hit Dice), or if the creature is taken from a non-core book like *Monster Manual II*, *Fiend Folio*, or the *Draconomicon*. See Appendix III for the proper way to format creature statistics.

Tactics (Optional)

Use this section to describe specific and unique tactics the creatures take in combat. Even unintelligent monsters can take advantage of terrain in combat. If an NPC uses magic to enhance his statistics, list what spells and items he uses to prepare for combat, and show how those effects modify his statistics. Any long duration or permanent magical effects should be noted and incorporated into the stat block in the "Creatures" section above.

Trap(s) (Optional)

This section describes any traps that the PCs might trigger in the encounter. The section ends with a trap stat block (see Appendix III for proper formatting notes) for all traps found in the encounter. If the creatures use the traps in some way against intruders, you should detail those actions in the Tactics section but refer to those tactics here.

Treasure (Optional)

Any treasure the PCs can find during the encounter is described here, above and beyond any possessions owned by the creatures in the room (a creature's possessions are detailed in that creature's stat block).

Remember, the total treasure available for the PCs to find in an adventure should be reflected in the adventure's level. Make sure to study Table 3—3 on page 51 and the sidebar on page 54 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine how much treasure to include in the adventure, and remember that NPC gear counts as well as treasure detailed in this section when determining totals. You don't need to adhere exactly to the totals given in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, but you should stay as close as you can.

Some adventures feature a large number of magic items that normally cannot be used by PCs.

Other adventures feature creatures with Improved Sunder or other attacks that can ruin magic items. In adventures like these, it's okay to give out higher amounts of treasure, since the PCs likely lose more of their gear than normal during the course of the adventure. Also, adventures with lots of NPCs tend to have a lot of treasure in the form of gear and equipment, and as a result should have a proportionally lower amount of treasure in these sections.

Avoid petty treasures, such as pouches of a dozen silver coins in a high-level adventure. Keeping track of miniscule amounts of treasure isn't worth the time and effort, and only slows down the game. Give individual creatures worthwhile treasures or give them nothing.

Remember, if you want to give a specific encounter a larger amount of treasure, you can compensate by not giving out treasure in other encounters.

Development (Optional)

Reactions to the sound of combat from other creatures nearby should be noted in this section, as well as conditions that might lead the creatures to surrender or flee the encounter.

Sometimes the PCs' actions can have unusual ramifications or affect later encounters. The PCs may find things have changed the second or third time they pass through the purple worm's lair after they kill the monster the first time through, for example. This section details how the encounter "evolves" once the PCs finish it, and how this evolution can affect other encounters in the adventure.

Ad-Hoc XP Adjustment (Optional)

As per page 39 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, certain encounters can place the creatures at a tactical advantage or disadvantage. In these cases, you may judge that the PCs deserve extra (or less) XP for overcoming a situation in which they have a disadvantage (or advantage) over the creature. Use this subhead in your encounter to note the XP adjustment for the encounter.

Likewise, not every encounter in your adventure should involve killing monsters or overcoming traps. Some encounters may be puzzles, mysteries, diplomatic situations, or role-playing opportunities. A distraught merchant might have his business revitalized by a group of PCs using Perform to attract more customers. A green and blue crystal door might open only after a spellcaster has channeled 20 levels of spells into its glowing facets. A huge library might require several Knowledge checks and Search checks to fully explore and uncover hidden clues. The PCs should gain experience for completing any encounter that advances the plot of the adventure, and you can use this section to indicate what sort of XP award the DM should give the PCs for its successful completion. Rather than give set amounts of experience for these "story" awards, assign them a specific CR value.

Concluding the Adventure (Mandatory)

Describe the possible consequences resulting from the adventure's success or failure, including rewards, punishments, and spin-off adventures for later gaming sessions. Most groups roleplay the consequences of a successful (or failed) adventure, and they should be provided with tools in this section to do just that. Make the players feel as if they've accomplished something (or that their failures have had repercussions beyond their own damaged reputations).

Scaling the Adventure (Mandatory)

All adventures in *Dungeon* include a "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. This sidebar contains suggestions the DM can use to modify the adventure's antagonists and encounters for PCs of higher or lower level. You should provide tips for a spread of two character levels in either direction from the level for which the adventure is designed, except in cases where this would move the adventure out of its designated challenge level (above 5th level for low-level adventures, below 6th level or above 12th level for mid-level adventures, and below 13th level for high-level adventures). If your adventure is for 18th level or higher, you should include some notes on how to scale the adventure into the epic realm (level 21 and above).

This sidebar should be no longer than 300 words.

Adapting the Adventure (Optional)

If the adventure takes place in a specific game world that is removed from the core D&D experience

(such as *EBERRON* or *Oriental Adventures*), or if the adventure makes extensive use of non-core materials (such as the *Expanded Psionics Handbook* or the *Planar Handbook*), include an "Adapting the Adventure" sidebar. This sidebar should tell the DM how to adapt the adventure for use in a D&D game that uses only the three core rulebooks, and should include substitutions for world-specific monsters, magic items, deities, locations, and other non-core material.

This sidebar should not be more than 300 words. If you find that you can't provide substitutions for everything in 300 words, focus on providing adaptation advice for the most unusual aspects of the adventure.

Author Bio (Mandatory)

The final paragraph of your adventure should be a short author bio—something to let the readers of the magazine know who you are. This shouldn't be more than one or two sentences, and yes, it counts against the adventure's total word count!

Appendix (Optional)

If you introduce only one or two simple magic items, a couple of new feats, or a single new spell, you can simply detail these new rules in a sidebar. If, on the other hand, your new rules are extensive (several new spells, new magic items, a new monster, a new prestige class, and so on), put them in an appendix at the end of the adventure. As a general rule, if your new rules bit is more than 300 words long, it should be in an appendix.

Showing Your Work

When you include stat blocks for NPCs and advanced monsters, you should indicate how you calculated skill point totals, and how a creature's Armor Class, saving throws, and attack rolls are calculated. Showing your work enables the editors to more thoroughly evaluate your adventure in a timely fashion. It's generally best to duplicate your stat blocks in a separate document from your adventure, and change the color of the text of your work so it's obvious what's stat block and what's behind-the-scenes-math. Showing your work in the text of an adventure only makes your word count inaccurate and makes the editors sad because they have to manually delete the math.

You should also show your work for any DC whose total contains nonobvious adjustments, and when you price out market values for new magic items.

There might be other occasions that also require you to show your work, though that is up to your discretion (only you know what sort of calculation went into a particular creation—if you'd rather demonstrate to the editors that your choice wasn't based on simple fancy, then showing your work is a good idea).

APPENDIX III: STAT BLOCKS

In *DUNGEON*, the majority of the stat blocks are creature stat blocks, although you may also need to include stat blocks for cities, objects, and traps. All of these stat blocks follow specific formats; make sure to follow these formats exactly in your adventure.

Creature Statistics

As the issues go by, we're constantly adjusting and improving the way we present stat blocks; we'll be updating this section of the writers' guidelines as we update our stat block styles. Specific things to remember when building any type of creature stat block follow.

Simple Stat Blocks

Creatures that are standard versions of monsters of the same name in the *Monster Manual* do not require full-length statistics. When such creatures are described under Creatures, the entry should contain an abbreviated stat block indicating creature name, number appearing, hit points, and a *Monster Manual* reference page. The abbreviated statistics can include a few minor changes (such as an orc that wears plate armor and thus has a lower speed and a higher AC), but if the creature is changed significantly, it's a *Monster Manual* variant.

Gorgon (3): hp 85; *Monster Manual* 137.

Complex Stat Blocks

Creatures that have advanced Hit Dice, class levels, or appear in books other than the Monster Manual should always be represented by complex stat blocks. Note that all lists should be given in alphabetical order unless noted otherwise. Here is a blank stat block template:

CHARACTER NAME (NUMBER APPEARING)   CR XX
Creature race, templates, and class levels
Creature alignment, size and type (subtype)
Creature reference (eg *Lords of Madness* 145)
Init XXX; **Senses** XXX; Listen XXX, Spot XXX
Aura XXX
Languages XXX

AC XXX, touch XXX, flat-footed XXX; Conditional AC modifiers
hp XXX (XXX HD); hp related special abilites; **DR** XXX/XXX
Immune XXX
Resist XXX **SR** XXX
Fort XXX, **Ref** XXX, **Will** XXX (Conditional save modifiers)
Weaknesses XXX

Spd XXX ft., burrow XXX ft., climb XXX ft., fly XXX ft (maneuverability), swim XXX ft.
Melee weapon +attack bonus (damage/critical hit information plus conditional damage) and/or
   weapon +attack bonus (damage/critical hit information plus conditional damage)
Ranged weapon +attack bonus (damage/critical hit information plus conditional damage) and/or
   weapon +attack bonus (damage/critical hit information plus conditional damage)
Space XXX; **Reach** XXX
Base Atk XXX; **Grp** XXX
Atk Options XXX
Special actions XXX
Combat Gear XXX
Spells Prepared/Known (CL XXX, melee touch XXX, ranged touch XXX):
   Spell level in descending order (number of spells/day)—*spell name* (DC XXX)
Domains/Prohibited schools
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd, melee touch XXX, ranged touch XXX):
   Number of times per day (fewest to most)—*ability name* (DC XXX)
*Use this to indicate any spells or abilities (such as *mage armor* or Power Attack) that have already been incorporated into its stat block
Abilities Str XXX, Dex XXX, Con XXX, Int XXX, Wis XXX, Cha XXX
SQ XXX
Feats XXX
Skills XXX
Possessions combat gear, XXX
Spellbook XXX
*Use this to indicate any inherent bonuses to the creature's ability scores

Special Ability Name (Sp/Su/Ex) Special ability description.

   The first section of a creature's stat block includes all the information necessary to handle the "before combat" portion of the encounter.

   Character Name (number appearing) and CR: The first line should include the name of the creature (if it is a unique creature) or a very brief title for the creature (such as "Kobold Guard") followed by the number appearing in parentheses. Include the CR of the individual creature after a single tab.

   Creature race, templates, and class levels: The second line should include the race of the creature, any templates that have been applied, and any class levels (starting with the first class taken). If you are using an advanced version of the creature, or you have given a creature the elite ability array when it would not otherwise receive it, you should state that on this line as well. If the creature has no class levels, and its race is given in the creature name, than this line can be omitted

(this frequently happens when you are reprinting the stat block of a non-core monster).

Creature alignment, size, and type (subtype): Give the two-letter abbreviation corresponding to the creature's alignment, followed by the creature's size, followed by the creature's type. Include any subtypes in parentheses. Note that the size of the creature is capitalized, but the type and subtypes are not. A humanoid creature's subtype need only be given if its subtype is different from the name of its race.

Creature reference: Put any necessary reference material on the fourth line. You need to include reference information for any race or class that does not appear in the *Player's Handbook*, as well as any monster. References should include the name of the book and the page number.

Init: The creature's total modifier on initiative checks.

Senses: A list of all the creature's sensory abilities (e.g., darkvision, low-light vision), followed by its Listen and Spot check modifiers after a semicolon.

Aura: A list of all of the abilities the creature possesses that affect all nearby enemies and/or allies, including the radius of the effects and their save DCs, if applicable.

Languages: List all the languages known to the creature. This should include racial languages, bonus languages from high Intelligence (but not from Intelligence points gained after 1st level), and languages purchased with skill points. Include special communication abilities like telepathy after languages, separated by a semicolon.

The second section of the creature's stat block includes all of its combat statistics that are relevant when it is not the creature's turn.

AC: Indicate a creature's standard Armor Class, touch Armor Class, and flat-footed Armor Class. If the creature has any conditional effects that modify its armor class (such as the Dodge and Mobility feats, or the uncanny dodge ability) list those after a semicolon. Include a breakdown of the creature's AC bonus only if the statblock is for a new monster.

hp: Give the monster's maximum hit point total, followed by the number of Hit Dice it has and its current hp total (if it's different from the maximum) in parenthesis. In general, creatures should have average hit points. Creatures with elite stats or class levels gain maximum hit points on their first Hit Die. Following a semicolon, list any abilities (such as fast healing or regeneration) that automatically affect a creature's hp total each round.

DR: Give the creature's damage reduction. If the creature has damage reduction from more than one source (such as a lycanthrope with the *stoneskin* spell) list them separately.

Immune: List the monster's immunities. If a monster gains several immunities from its type, only note that (e.g., "undead traits"), don't list all of those immunities.

Resist: List the creature's energy resistances, including those from *resist energy* or similar spells that you are incorporating into the creature's stat block.

SR: Give the creature's spell resistance.

Fort, Ref, Will: Give the creature's total saving throw bonuses (Fortitude, Reflex, and Will). If the creature has any conditional effects that affect saving throws, list them in parentheses following this entry.

Weaknesses: If the creature has any special weaknesses note them here.

The third section of the stat block gives all of the creature's combat statistics that are relevant when it is the creature's turn.

Spd: Give the creature's current land speed (including any modifiers for spells or armor), followed by speeds for other modes of movement. If the creature has a fly speed, list its maneuverability in parenthesis following the speed.

Melee: List all of the creature's likely melee attack routines, from most likely to least likely. Each line of this entry should contain all the relevant information for a single weapon, followed by an "and" (if the next line is part of the same attack routine) or an "or" (if the next line is part of a different attack routine). You should always give the statistics for a creature's most likely single attack first, although if its most likely single attack is part of its most likely attack routine, you may simply list that whole routine.

Each line of this entry should begin with the name of the weapon, followed by the creature's attack bonus with that weapon. If the creature gets multiple attacks with a single weapon, list the attack bonuses, from largest to smallest, separated by slashes. After the attack bonus, list the weapon's

damage, followed by the weapon's critical hit statistics (threat range and damage multiplier) separated by slashes, if they are different from the minimum values (which are 20 and x2). If a weapon deals an additional form of damage or has another effect, include the additional damage by appending the word "plus" after the critical hit statistics and then list the additional damage or effect. The damage, critical hit statistics, and additional effects should be given in parentheses for each weapon.

   If the creature always uses Power Attack or Combat Expertise to modify its attack rolls, place an asterisk after the word "Melee," incorporate the modifiers into the creature's stat block, and make a note at the end of this section.

   Ranged: This entry is formatted in the same way as the Melee entry, but is for ranged attacks.

   Space: The length of one side of a creature's square (e.g., 5 feet for Medium creatures, or 10 feet for Large creatures).

   Reach: The creature's natural reach. If one of a creature's natural weapons has a different natural reach than the rest of them, list that weapon's reach followed by its name in parentheses. You can omit both the Space and Reach entries if the creature's Space and Reach are both 5 feet.

   Base Atk: The creature's base attack bonus.

   Grp: The creature's total grapple bonus.

   Atk Options: List any of the creature's feats that are relevant in combat that are not already incorporated into its stat block elsewhere on this line, followed by any of the creature's special abilities that modify its attacks that have not already been incorporated into the stat block elsewhere. If the attack option does damage, is useable a certain number of times per day, or has a save DC, list that following the ability name. Some examples of attack options are: Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Whirlwind Attack, attach, constrict 1d6+4, improved grab (if the monster has improved grab with some of its natural attacks but not others, list all of the attacks that it can use improved grab with in parentheses following this ability), pounce, rage 2/day, rend 2d6+12, smite 1/day (+4 attack, +2 damage), sneak attack +2d6.

   Special Actions: List any of a creature's special abilities that it can use in place of making an attack on its turn. This should include any combat special ability that requires a standard action to use. Note that feats should never be placed in this line, but in the Atk Options line above. If the special action does damage, is useable a certain number of times per day, or has a save DC, list that following the ability name. Some of the more complicated special actions have a specific format—use the following examples as a template: bardic music 7/day (countersong, *fascinate*, inspire courage +1, inspire competence, *suggestion* [DC 16]), breath weapon (100-ft. line or 50-ft. cone, 16d8 electricity, Reflex DC 29 half), crush (2d8+15, Reflex DC 29 negates), petrifying gaze (DC 23), poison (DC 13, 1d6 Str/1d6 Con), swallow whole, tail sweep (2d8+18 plus trip, Reflex DC 30 half), trample 3d8+24 (DC 34), turn undead 5/day (+6, 2d6+14, 12th).

   Combat Gear: This section should include any consumable items the creature might wish to use in combat, as well as any short-duration magic items that require a standard action (or longer) to activate. Items that grant persistent or long-duration magical effects should not be listed here, but incorporated into the creature's stat block and listed on the possessions line below. If you include an item with charges, an item that duplicates a spell with an unusual caster level, or a quantity of similar items, indicate the relevant information in parentheses following the item name.

   Spells Prepared/Known: This line should include the spellcasting class for which you are listing spells, the caster level that these spells are cast at, the ranged and melee touch attack bonuses of the creature (if it can cast any spells that call for ranged or melee touch attacks), and the creature's bonus on caster level checks to overcome spell resistance (if the bonus is different from the creature's caster level). On the following lines, you should list the spells the creature can cast, starting with the highest-level spells and proceeding to the lowest. Include all the spells of each level on a single line. Start each line with the level of the spells you are listing, followed by the names of the spells and the save DCs for each spell in parentheses after the spell names (if the spell calls for a saving throw).

   If you are listing spells for a class that casts spells without preparation (such as a sorcerer), include the number of spells of each spell level the creature can cast per day in parentheses immediately after you give the spell level, and before you start listing spells. Don't use a times sign for multiple spells, just add the number of duplicate spells prepared in parentheses after the spell. Mark domain spells

with a superscript D. Mark any spells that the creature has already cast with an asterisk, reduce the number of spells per day on that line of the stat block (if necessary), and incorporate the effects of that spell into the creature's stat block (if appropriate).

Domains/Prohibited Schools: If the creature is a cleric or a specialist wizard, note its domains or its prohibited schools of magic here.

Spell-Like Abilities: This entry is similar to the Spells Prepared/Known entry above, except the spell-like abilities should be listed in order of the number of times per day they can be used, from most frequent to least frequent, with all the spell-like abilities a creature can use with the same frequency listed on the same line.

The third section of a creature's stat block includes supplemental information, and statistics for its non-combat abilities.

Abilities: The creature's ability scores, modified for gear worn and any spells you are incorporating into its stat block. If the creature has any inherent bonuses to its ability scores, you should include an asterisk after the ability score and make a note at the end of the section.

SQ: List any of the creature's non-combat special abilities that have not already been given elsewhere in the stat block here. Some examples are: alternate form, spontaneous casting (cure spells), summon familiar (rat named Fluffy), trapfinding, trap sense +2, trackless step, woodland stride, wild empathy +5.

Feats: List all of the creature's feats here, even the ones that have already been listed elsewhere in the stat block.

Skills: List of all the creature's skills followed by their modifiers. You may omit skills that have a modifier equal to the creature's appropriate ability bonus. If a skill has a conditional modifier, list the new bonus followed by the condition in parentheses after the skill bonus (e.g. Survival +8 (+10 on other planes). Don't forget to include bonuses from ability scores, race, magic items, familiars, class abilities, armor check penalties, skill synergy bonuses, and other bonuses. Remember that creatures that have land speeds of less than or greater than 30 ft. have additional modifiers to Jump checks, and creatures that are smaller than or larger than Medium have additional modifiers to Hide checks. Remember also that humans gain additional skill points. Finally, if a creature increased its Intelligence score as it gained additional Hit Dice or class levels, it may gain more skill points at those higher levels. Don't just calculate that wizard's skill points based on his final Intelligence at 20th level!

Possessions: If the creature had any combat gear, start this entry with the words "combat gear," followed by a list of any items held, carried, or worn by the creature, in the following order: armor, melee weapons, ranged weapons with ammunition, permanent stat-boosting items, other permanent items, nonmagical items of value, purely flavor stuff like identification papers, coins. Expensive items have their features and value listed in parentheses. Don't forget to include expensive spell focuses and material components.

Spellbook: If the creature keeps spells in a spellbook, list them here. You do not need to repeat spells the creature has already prepared. For 0-level spells, it's okay to say "all" instead of mentioning every spell by name. For a specialist wizard, prohibited schools should be mentioned here as well. Spells mentioned in this paragraph do not require save DCs.

The final section of the stat block contains additional information about the creature's special abilities. If the creature does not have any special abilities that temporarily modify its other statistics or appear in sources other than the *Monster Manual*, the *Player's Handbook*, and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, than you may omit this section altogether.

If the creature possesses special abilities that require additional explanation (including any abilty that is not presented in the books above), give a detailed description of each ability in a new paragraph. If the creature possesses any special abilities that temporarily modify its statistics that it uses in combat (such as alternate form or rage), you need to list the ability here, followed by the creature's updated statistics when it is using the ability. Only list those statistics that are altered by the ability.

Minions: If a creature has an animal companion or special mount, include its stat block at the end of the creature's stat block. You can use simple stat blocks if the creature's Hit Dice are identical to the standard creature detailed in the *Monster Manual*. You generally don't need to include stat blocks for familiars, although you do for improved familiars.

Sample Complex Stat Blocks

BELIG   CR 2
Male goblin fighter 2
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)
Monster Manual 133
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot –1, Listen –1
Languages Common, Giant, Goblin

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Dodge
hp 17 (2 HD)
Fort +4 **Ref** +2 **Will** –1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee flail +4 (1d6+1)
Ranged throwing axe +5 (1d4+1/x2)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –1
Atk Options Combat Expertise

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ goblin traits
Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Skill Focus (Intimidate)
Skills Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +9, Ride +10, Swim -4
Possessions scale mail, heavy wooden shield, light flail, 2 throwing axes, bullhorn, large rock crystal (70 gp), 2 pearls (100 gp each), 43 gp

SEA TIGERS (2)   CR 6
N Huge animal
Monster Manual III 147
Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 18
hp 75 (10 HD)
Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft., 50 ft.
Melee bite +9 (2d8+4) and
  2 claws +4 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +19
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack

Abilities Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 8
SQ hold breath
Feats Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Run
Skills Hide +6, Swim +12

Blindsight (Ex) A sea tiger emits high-frequency sounds inaudible to other creatures that allow it to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. A *silence* spell negates this ability.
Hold Breath (Ex) A sea tiger can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 6 times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

DUALLEN TEIRGAR, dwarf form CR 18
Male dwarf blacktooth dire werewolverine wizard 13
Monster Manual 170
CE Medium humanoid (dwarf, shapechanger)
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +10, Listen +10
Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 25
hp 77 (92 with *false life*) (18 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine; fast healing 5
SR 28
Resist cold 30

Fort +16 (+18 vs. poison), **Ref** +11, **Will** +17 (+2 vs. spells)

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *quarterstaff* +10/+5 (1d6+1)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +10 (1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +9

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 13th, +17 to overcome SR, +9 ranged touch)

   7th—*forcecage*

   6th—*globe of invulnerability*, quickened *mirror image*

   5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cone of cold* (DC 21), quickened *ray of enfeeblement*, *teleport**

   4th—*Evard's black tentacles*, *confusion* (DC 20), *ice storm*, *shout* (DC 18), *stoneskin**

   3rd—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19) (2), *slow* (DC 19)

   2nd—*false life**, *glitterdust* (DC 18), *Melf's acid arrow*, *resist energy**, *see invisibility**, *web* (DC 18)

   1st—*feather fall*, *mage armor* (3)*, *magic missile*, *shield*

   0—*daze* (DC 16), *detect magic* (2), *ghost sound*

* already cast

Abilities Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 22, Wis 10, Cha 9

SQ alternate form, dwarf traits, lycanthropic empathy, summon familiar (rat)

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration, Toughness, Track

Skills Climb +6, Concentration +22, Craft (alchemy) +17, Gather Information +1, Hide +2, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +18, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +10, Move Silently +2, Spellcraft +22, Spot +10

Possessions combat gear, +1 *quarterstaff*, *ring of protection +2*, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *cloak of resistance +3*, *headband of intellect +2*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, 1,500 gp worth of ruby dust, 500 gp worth of diamond dust

Spellbook as above plus 0—all; 1st—*burning hands*, *charm person*, *color spray*, *sleep*; 2nd—*command undead*, *knock*, *scorching ray*; 3rd—*blink*, *fly*, *nondetection*; 4th—*dimension door*, *dimensional anchor*, *polymorph*; 5th—*dismissal*, *summon monster V*; 6th—*analyze dweomer*, *create undead*; 7th—*limited wish*

Alternate Form (Su) In hybrid form, Duallen cannot cast any spells with verbal components, and his statistics change as follows:

  CE Large humanoid (shapechanger)

  Init +3

  AC 31, touch 14, flat-footed 28

  hp 149 (164 with *false life*); **DR** 10/silver and magic, 10/adamantine; fast healing 5

  Fort +20 (+22 vs poison) **Ref** +14

  Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+6) and
    bite +9 (2d6+3 plus curse of lycanthropy)

  Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

  Grp +19

  Abilities Str 23, Dex 16, Con 21

  Skills Climb +20, Concentration +26, Move Silently +5

Alternate Form (Su) In dire wolverine form, the Duallen cannot cast spells with verbal, somatic or material components, and his statistics change as follows:

  CE Large humanoid (shapechanger)

  Init +3

  AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 27

  hp 149 (164 with *false life*); **DR** DR 10/silver and magic, 10/adamantine; fast healing 5

  Fort +17 (+19 vs poison) **Ref** +11 **Will** +14

  Spd 40 ft., climb 10 ft.

  Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+6) and
    bite +9 (2d6+3 plus curse of lycanthropy)

  Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

  Grp +19

  Atk Options rage

  Abilities Str 23, Dex 16, Con 21

Skills Climb +20, Concentration +26, Move Silently +5

Possessions Duallen cannot use or carry any of his possessions while in dire wolverine form.

Rage (Ex) If Duallen takes damage while in dire wolverine form he flies into a berserk rage on his next turn, clawing and biting madly until either he or his opponent is dead. Duallen cannot end his rage voluntarily. While Duallen is raging, his statistics change further as follows:

AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25

hp 185 (200 with *false life*); **DR** 10/silver and magic, 10/adamantine; fast healing 5

Fort +19 (+21 vs poison)

Melee 2 claws +16 (1d8+8) and
   bite +11 (2d6+4 plus curse of lycanthropy)

Grp +21

Abilities Str 27, Dex 16, Con 25

Skills Climb +22, Move Silently +5

ARTOR MORLIN   CR 21

Male vampire human fighter 13/blackguard 3/master vampire 3

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Monster Manual 250, *Libris Mortis* 55

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +14, Listen +14

Aura despair (10 ft., -2 on saves)

Languages Alzhedo, Common, Chondathan

AC 29, touch 14, flat-footed 25; Dodge, Mobility

hp 129 (19 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/silver and magic

Resist cold 10, electricity 10

Immune undead type

Fort +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

Weaknesses vampire weakness

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee +2 *vampiric two-bladed sword* +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+11/19-20 plus poison plus vampiric) and
   +2 *vampiric two-bladed sword* +25/+20/+15 (1d8+7/19-20 plus poison plus vampiric) or
   +2 *vampiric two-bladed sword* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+14/19-20 plus poison plus vampiric) or
   slam +24 (1d6+7 plus energy drain)

Base Atk +17; **Grp** +24

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Special Actions blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 27), rebuke undead 7/day (+8, 2d6+7, 1st)

Blackguard Spells Prepared (CL 5th):
   2nd—*eagle's splendor*
   1st—*corrupt weapon* (2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd):
   At will—*detect good*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 18, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 22

SQ alternate form, enhanced spawn, gaseous form, master's chosen, spider climb, turn resistance +4 (+1 for each spawn within 30 ft.)

Feats Alertness[B], Ability Focus (dominate), Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes[B], Dodge[B], Endure Sunlight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword)[B], Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Domination, Improved Initiative[B], Improved Sunder[B], Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Lightning Reflexes[B], Mobility[B], Power Attack[B], Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword)[B], Weapon Specialization (two-bladed sword)[B], Whirlwind Attack

Skills Bluff +19, Climb +15, Concentration +9, Diplomacy +28, Disguise +10 (+12 acting), Gather Information +12, Hide +24, Intimidate +26, Jump +15, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Search +10, Sense Motive +14, Spot +14, Tumble +6

Possessions *shoonfangs* (+2 *vampiric*/+2 *vampiric two-bladed sword*), *Artor's armament* (+5 *mithral chain shirt*), *belt of giant Strength +4*, *bowl of blood* (not carried, see below), *cloak of etherealness*, 10 additional doses of purple worm poison (Fort DC 24, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str), a large assortment of keys

Enhanced Spawn (Su): Any vampire or vampire spawn created by Artor gains a +2 enhancement bonus to its Str and Dex scores. If Artor is destroyed or releases the spawn from service, the spawn loses this bonus.

Master's Chosen (Su): Artor can designate a single vampire or vampire spawn that he created with his create spawn ability as his chosen. Doing this requires a 1-hour ritual during which the chosen must consume a small portion of the master's flesh. The chosen gains a +6 enhancement bonus to its Strength and Dexterity scores. Artor can remove this designation as a standard action. If Artor is destroyed or releases the chosen from service, the chosen loses this bonus.

City Stat Blocks

Much like creatures, settlements that appear in adventures have a wide range of information that the DM must know to run encounters there. Pages 137–143 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* cover the details of creating city stat blocks. The format for writing stat blocks for settlements is as follows.

Name (size): [Power center type: Conventional, Nonstandard, or Magical]; AL [alignment abbreviation]; # gp limit; Assets # gp; Population #; [Racial mix; Isolated, Mixed, or Integrated] (race #, race #, race #, etc.).] NOTE: The number that follows each race name is a percentage of the entire population, not the exact number of individuals of that race.

Authority Figure(s): [Name, alignment gender race class & level.]

Important Characters: [Name, alignment gender race class & level (title or position); Name, alignment gender race class & level (title or position); Name, alignment gender race class & level (title or position); etc.]

Notes: Place any special notes about the community here.

Sample City Stat Block

Marsember (metropolis): Conventional; AL LN; 100,000 gp limit; Assets 180,035,000 gp; Population 36,007; Mixed (79% human, 7% halfling, 4% half-elf, 3% elf, 3% gnome, 2% dwarf, 1% half-orc, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: **Lord Bledryn Scoril**, LN male human fighter 9 (the King's Lord of Marsember); **Ayesunder Truesilver,** N male human fighter 15 (Warden of the Port).

Important Characters: **Blentra Whaelbuckler,** NG female human fighter 9/rogue 1/harper scout 2 (Harper agent); **Charnae Truesil,** LG female human aristocrat 2/expert 6 (Constable of Marsember); **Delthrin the Deadmaster,** LN male human necromancer 7/loremaster 5 (mysterious necromancer and defender of the city); **Elestra Blaebur,** CN female human bard 6 (popular singer and dancer who secretly delivers messages for War Wizards); **Filfaeril Stormbillow,** N female human wizard 16 (retired adventurer and magic item merchant); **High Morninglord Chansobal Dreen,** LG male human cleric 12 (highpriest of Morningmist Hall); **Scoril,** LG male human fighter 4 (Herald of Marsember); **Szwentil,** N male human fighter 3 (merchant and shipwright); **Vindala Chalanther,** LN female human illusionist 15 (tutor and mage for hire).

Notes: Marsember's network of canals can make it difficult for people to get around. Fortunately, a large number of skiffs are available for easy transport along the canals. The greatest landmark in town is undoubtedly the King's Tower, the abode of Lord Bledryn Scoril and the city garrison. Other notable buildings include Morningmist Hall (the rosy walled temple of Lathander) and the frowning ramparts of Starwater Keep.

Object Stat Blocks

Any items that the player characters may need to interact with in some manner should have statistics in the manuscript. Common examples include doors, walls, chests, and altars.

Object: # in. or ft. thick; Hardness #; hp #; Break DC #. NOTE: You can add additional DCs, such as Escape Artist or Open Lock, as necessary.

Sample Object Stat Block

Dangling Iron Cage: 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 40.

Trap Stat Blocks

All traps in your manuscript must be accompanied by a trap stat block. Pages 67–76 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide* provide a wealth of detail about the design and construction of traps. You should familiarize yourself with these rules if your adventure includes any traps. If your trap doesn't include

any of the following elements, feel free to leave those elements out of your stat block. Additionally, if the trap is obvious and can be destroyed by damage, incorporate an object stat block into the trap stat block.

Some complex traps are difficult to condense into a stat block. In such a case, you should build as much of the stat block as you can, and refer the reader as appropriate to the text of the adventure in the stat block.

Sample Trap Stat Block

Slashing Blades Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 30); Atk +16 melee (2d4+8 plus poison/x4, 2 scythes); poison (dragon bile, Fortitude DC 26 negates, initial 3d6 Str, secondary none); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 21.

APPENDIX IV: SAMPLE ENCOUNTER

5. Storage room (EL 2)

This circular room holds a scattering of chests of all shapes and sizes. Their contents have been thrown onto the floor in a jumble. The ceiling is covered in soot, and ash is mixed in with the mess on the floor.

This was once the depot's main storage room. The House of the Circlet used this room to store sensitive items of no immediate use. When the depot was abandoned, the House carried off what they could and sent Baron Wildhurst here to set fire to the rest. They hoped to destroy the evidence of what was plotted here so long ago.

Creatures: Many of the chests that remain in this room have mlarraun woven into the knotwork holding their handles closed. Resembling 5-foot-long dark brown snakes, mlarrauns have the remarkable property of turning to stone when targeted by magic, and changing back to flesh upon being struck by a second spell. Thus, any spellcaster attempting to use *knock* to get into the chests would release their defenders. In the time since the depot was abandoned, the mlarraun woke from their stone torpor and began to fend for themselves. Most abandoned the depot or starved, but one mated pair remains, living well now that the goblin midden heap (area **3**) provides them with an ample source of rats. While not hungry, these guardian snakes were bred to attack without provocation, and do so as soon as a character gets too close.

MLARRAUN (2)　　　CR 1
N Medium magical beast
Serpent Kingdoms 70
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +5, Listen +5

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13
hp 11 (2 HD)
Fort +3 **Ref** +6 **Will** +1

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.
Melee bite +5 (1d4–1 plus poison)
Ranged poison spit +5 ranged touch (poison)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1
Special Actions poison (Fortitude DC 11; blindness for 2d6 hours/blindness for 4d6 hours plus 1d4 damage)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
SQ stone torpor
Feats Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +7

Stone Torpor (Su): Any spell or magical effect that specifically targets a mlarraun causes it to instantly lapse into a torpor that lasts for d100 days. Its scales become hard and gray, though its body remains flexible. Contact with magic weapons or other magic items that do not specifically target the mlarraun does not trigger this change. In this form, the creature's natural armor bonus rises to +10. Damage in excess of one-half its original hit points awakens the mlarraun instantly, as does any spell that targets it.

Tactics: The mlarraun hide under the rubble, and try to blind each of the characters with their poison spit. They strike targets in the order offered, being careful to return to cover after each hit and expecting their poison to render the invaders helpless.

Development: A druid or ranger using wild empathy can get the attention of, and parley with, the mlarraun. The mlarraun are vain creatures, and anyone who panders to their vanity by flattering their looks and cunning gets a +4 circumstance bonus on wild empathy checks. The mlarraun start as unfriendly, but if their attitude can be improved to indifferent (DC 15) or better they do not attack the party.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Using wild empathy to dissuade the mlarrauns from attacking is worth the same amount of experience as defeating them in combat.