



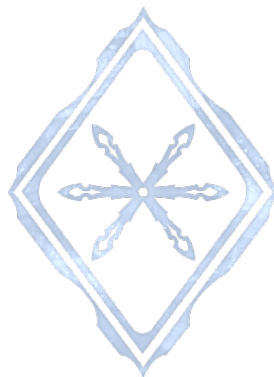
DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE

VERSION 10.0

PLAGUE OF ANCIENTS

A CAMPAIGN SUPPORTING

ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN



Credits

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PART 1. GETTING STARTED

This document is a guide to getting started as a Dungeon Master (DM) for the Forgotten Realms D&D Adventurers League campaign featuring *ICEWIND DALE: RIME OF THE FROSTMAIDEN*. These rules are supplemented by the Seasonal Campaign versions of the Adventurers League FAQ, the Adventurers League Player's Guide, and the Adventurers League Content Catalogue.

SHARED WORLD PLAY

The D&D Adventurers League has four distinct campaigns you can play in: The Seasonal Campaign, the Historic Campaign, the Masters Campaign, and our Eberron Campaign. See the corresponding guides for more information.

Seasonal Campaign. This is the current campaign supporting the release of *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. This campaign is called *Plague of Ancients*. Adventures for this campaign will be marked DDAL10-##.

Masters Campaign. This is our campaign for higher level play, called *Dreams of the Red Wizards*. Adventures for this campaign will be marked DDAL-DRW##.

Historic Campaign. This comprises adventures from all seasons prior to the Seasonal Campaign. Adventures for this are marked with DDAL##-##.

Eberron Campaign. This is our *Oracle of War* campaign, and information for play in that campaign is outside the scope of this document.

D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE PLAY

D&D Adventurers League play can take place practically **ANYWHERE**—whether at home, online, a friendly local game and hobby store, a library or school, or even a convention.

DMs and players alike participate in Adventurers League play utilizing a variety of adventure content options. These currently include D&D Introductory Adventures, D&D Premiere Play, and playing through the published D&D adventures (called **hardcover** adventures). Additionally, many convention organizers have created approved D&D Adventurers League adventures called Convention-Created Content adventures (CCC) specifically for their conventions.

D&D Introductory Adventures. These adventures accompany new Wizards of the Coast print products and premier at participating friendly local game and hobby stores and are meant to introduce you to new content.

D&D Premiere Play. These adventures support Wizards of the Coast storyline product releases. They're purchased from the Dungeon Masters Guild. Dungeon Masters purchasing Premier Play adventures can run them as often as they like.

LEAVING THE SEASONAL CAMPAIGN

Each character may leave the Seasonal Campaign at any time, provided they are the appropriate level for another campaign's adventure. Once a player decides to play an adventure in the Historic or Masters Campaign, they must conform to the character rules in that campaign and can no longer have that character return to the Seasonal Campaign.

BEING A DUNGEON MASTER

Being an Adventurers League DM is easy and fun. Most of the adventures can be prepared in a short period of time, and you don't have to create all sorts of background material.

WHAT YOU NEED TO RUN A GAME

In order to run a game as a DM in D&D Adventurers League games, you'll need the following:

D&D Basic Rules. This [pdf document](#) is free on the Wizards of the Coast website and contains all the basic rules of the game. For a more complete experience, we recommend you use a fifth edition D&D *Player's Handbook*.

Adventures. Besides their players, the most important thing that a DM needs is an adventure to run. For the Seasonal Campaign players can participate in *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*, shorter form adventures (DDAL10-##), Epics (DDEP10-##), and Convention Created Content (CCC) specific to this season.

If you're running games at a public event, check with the event's organizer to see what adventures they have available. Otherwise, adventures are available for purchase at your local gaming store (hardcover adventures only) or online at www.dmsguild.com.

Players. Play is designed for a table of five players but is easily adjusted to as few as three to as many as seven players. Tables smaller or larger than this might provide a suboptimal play experience and aren't recommended.

GROUP COMPOSITION

There's no general rule that requires members of a group be of a like level. However, the adventure you're running may have limitations that your players must abide by.

Hardcover Adventures. These adventures usually have a wide level range that spans multiple tiers (levels 1-10, etc.). As long as a character is within the adventure's level band when they begin the adventure, they can continue to play it if they advance outside of it.

Shorter-Form Adventures. These adventures usually coincide with the four tiers of play and typically take between 2-8 hours to complete. Characters can only play this adventure if they're within the adventure's level band. Epic adventures (DDEP) usually have multiple "tracks" that accommodate multiple tiers; a character must be within the tier prescribed by the track to play it.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

These things aren't required but are nice to have:

Monster Manual (MM). While the statistics for most monsters can be found here, special monsters created specifically for a given season's published adventure are found in that product. As a general rule, the adventure will contain the stat block for all monsters featured.

Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG). This book contains valuable advice on preparing and running games. The DMG also contains descriptions of magic items that might be awarded during the course of play, so it is suggested that you bring that information with you to the table if it is not provided in the adventure.

Dungeon Master Screen. Helpful to hide the adventure and your notes and schemes from the players.

Miniatures and Map Surfaces. If you and your players enjoy playing a more tactical game of D&D, you can use these to help depict combats and detailed areas.

PART 2. RUNNING ADVENTURES

You can DM one group of players at a time—each player must have their own character within the adventure’s level range. Characters that play a **hardcover** adventure can continue to play it if they advance out of its level range.

YOU’RE THE DUNGEON MASTER!

You have the most important role. You guide the narrative and bring the words on the pages of the adventure to life. While guiding the players, it is also your responsibility to make everyone feel welcomed at the table creating a fun and fair environment. Here are some things to keep in mind:

YOU ARE EMPOWERED

Make decisions about how the group interacts with the adventure; adjust or improvise but maintain the adventure’s spirit. The setting, general story, and prominent NPCs of the adventure should remain largely the same; if an adventure introduces other players’ characters to Cassyt, the plucky acolyte of Kelemvor that resides in Phlan, your players should as well. Less important details, such as the time of year or the weather can be tailored to your group.

CHALLENGE YOUR PLAYERS

Gauge the experience level of your players, as well as what they enjoy in a game and attempt to deliver what they’re after; everyone should be able to shine.

You can adjust an encounter’s difficulty by adding or removing thematically appropriate monsters, but can’t create new monsters or modify them in such a way that **potentially** modifies their challenge rating (aside from changing their hit points within the range afforded by their hit dice).

Be careful of going too far, however. The intent is to have a collaborative and challenging story-telling experience; it’s not to do everything you can to kill your players’ characters. Similarly, destroying equipment generally shouldn’t happen unless an encounter specifically directs you to. In fact, unless they have conditions detailing their destruction (such as an *ioun stone*), permanent magic items can’t be destroyed.

KEEP THE GAME MOVING

If the game gets bogged down, provide hints and clues to your players facing puzzles or engaging in combat and roleplay interactions that get frustrating. This gives players “little victories” for making good choices based on clues received. When playing within a given time constraint, such as at a convention, it is important to gauge the pacing of your game. It’s okay to make adjustments when you get bogged down to promote a play experience that feels complete.

RUNNING THE GAME

As the DM, you are charged with not only guiding the story, but also fairly adjudicating the game’s rules and rewarding your players’ characters for their accomplishments.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Adventurers League play uses fifth edition Dungeons and Dragons. You can issue rulings to your table when the rules of the game are ambiguous or vague, but you must otherwise adhere to the rules as they are provided in the core rulebooks, and can’t change them or make up your own; “house-rules” aren’t permitted for use. You must always use the most **current** incarnation of a rule.

Further, the options and variant rules listed below are available for your use; others aren’t permitted without specific campaign documentation:

- Variant: Playing on a Grid
- Variant: Skills with Different Abilities

While they aren’t official rules that **must** be followed, the Sage Advice column, tweets from the D&D Team on Twitter, or even discussions with other DMs on your favorite social media platform can provide good insight on how others adjudicated a particular issue. The rules as written in the rulebooks, however, **always** take precedence.

DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

As a general rule, characters can use downtime activities between or during sessions. However, if you feel that no sufficient periods of inactivity exist to justify it, you can disallow a character using a downtime activity **during** a session. For example, the journey from Phlan to Waterdeep is very long, so it’s reasonable to assume that the characters can spend downtime days copying spells or recuperating. But the trip from one end of Waterdeep to the other is much shorter—there may not be enough time to stop and learn a language. Be fair and consistent in exercising this discretion.

DEATH, DISEASE, AND CURSES

Adventuring is a risky job, and bad things often happen to adventurers. Diseases, poisons, and other similar effects persist until they’re removed, but characters can spend downtime days and/or gold to receive spellcasting services or to recuperate. Bodies of characters killed during a session are recoverable unless the adventure specifically states otherwise. You have the ultimate discretion to determine whether sufficient periods of inactivity justify this.

NPC Spellcasting Services. Characters can receive spellcasting services from an NPC located anywhere that is at least town-sized (1000 or more residents) or has a specific NPC able to cast the spell(s) needed. In addition, the characters must be able to travel there in order to receive services **during** a session. Otherwise, they’re available only **between** sessions. Spellcasting services provided by NPCs are limited to the spells on this list. Characters can purchase *spell scrolls* which can be cast for free, but **only** upon themselves.

Spellcasting Service	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i>	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i>	40 gp
<i>Dispel magic</i>	90 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater Restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i> ²	1,000 gp
<i>Resurrection</i> ²	3,000 gp
<i>True resurrection</i> ²	30,000 gp

Shelter of the Faithful Background Feature. Characters with the Shelter of the Faithful background feature can request NPC spellcasting services at a temple dedicated to their chosen deity. While the service of casting the spell is free, the characters must pay the cost of any material component consumed by casting the spell. These characters can't procure free services for others; only themselves. During a session, only specific temples near the adventure's location (as identified below) can grant this benefit to their faithful acolytes:

Season & Region	Acolyte-Friendly Temples
10. Ten-Towns	Auril, Lathander, Tempus

CHARACTER REWARDS

You award the players rewards for their accomplishments in the form of levels, gold, and magic items for their characters, which they record on their Adventure Logsheets **before** leaving the table.

Advancement. Once the players successfully complete an adventure, inform them that they've gained a level. During play sessions from hardcover adventures, you can decide whether they gain a level (though sometimes the adventure will make this decision for you). If you don't, they gain a level after **four** hours of play (or **eight** hours at tier 2 – 4). A character can gain no more than one level per session. Characters can **always** decline to advance, forfeiting the advancement it grants. This choice is made by the player.

Magic Items. Characters can use and keep any magic item they find that is specifically mentioned in the encounter in which it's found (items that the adventure describes as being lent to the characters or destroyed can't be kept). At the end of the session, each character can keep any of the **permanent** magic items found during the session—to a maximum number of items based on their tier (common items aren't subject to this limitation). They divide **consumable** magic items (potions, scrolls, and ammunition) equitably among themselves—resolving disagreements randomly if necessary. For example, if multiple players want a *potion of healing* that the group has found, have them each roll a die and award it to the player that rolls the highest!

Some adventures direct you to roll on a Magic Item Table in the DMG to determine what type of magic item is found; these directions are **ignored**. Others direct you or the player to choose the magic item; these items are selected from either the DMG or the adventure itself. If the adventure is silent on the rarity of the item, it must be appropriate to the tier of the character receiving it, as follows:

Tier	Maximum Rarity	Tier	Maximum Rarity
1	Uncommon	3	Very rare
2	Rare	4	Legendary

Mundane Treasure. Mundane equipment found during the session can be used but can't be sold and is lost at the end of the session. Spellbooks and items without mechanical properties (such as trinkets or other objects without a specified value) mentioned in the encounter are divided equitably among the characters in the same way that consumable magic items are awarded.

Treasure with a specified monetary value (gp, gems, art objects, etc.) in the encounter is **ignored**. Instead, for each hour of play, you award each character an amount of gold based on their tier (see below). You have a lot of flexibility in how this gold is distributed and what form it takes, though you can use the treasure entries as cues to award gold and what form that gold might take. A goblin, for example, might carry dirty copper coins, while a wealthy merchant lord might carry paper writs redeemable for gold. Alternatively, in a public event setting, you can wait and award the cumulative hourly awards at the end of the play session in the form of a chest of gold bars. The campaign staff **strongly suggests** that actively engaged players be awarded the **maximum** amount of gold for each hour. Otherwise, the characters earn a **minimum** amount for each hour of the session. Once a character has obtained an amount of gold equal to their GP Limit, they can't earn more until they advance in level.

Tier	Hourly GP Award (Min GP Award)	GP Limit/Level
1	20 gp (10 gp)	80 gp
2	30 gp (15 gp)	240 gp
3	200 gp (100 gp)	1,600 gp
4	750 gp (375 gp)	6,000 gp

Story Effects/Items. These items or effects—designated by the Seasonal Adventurers League Content Catalogue—are essential to a hardcover adventure's storyline and are only useable during sessions of the adventure in which they're awarded. These items don't count against a character's Magic Item Limit, and only one character can have a story item at the table at the same time.