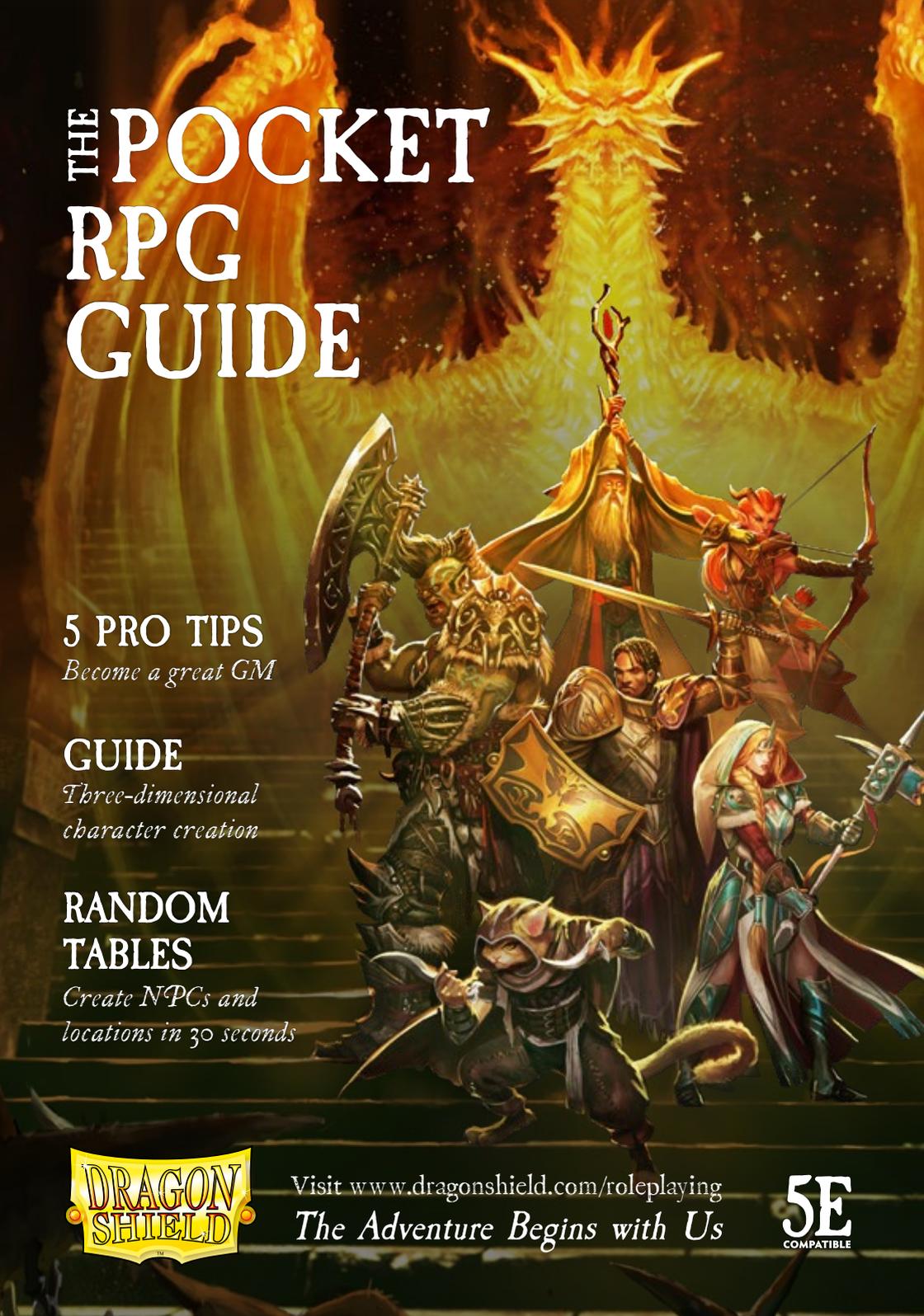


THE POCKET RPG GUIDE



5 PRO TIPS

Become a great GM

GUIDE

*Three-dimensional
character creation*

RANDOM TABLES

*Create NPCs and
locations in 30 seconds*



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5E
COMPATIBLE

BREATHING LIFE INTO A CHARACTER

Discovering your new character is one of the best parts of roleplaying! Ensure you have as fulfilling an experience as possible by starting out with a three-dimensional character. Let's take a closer look at what it takes to create a great tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) character.

If you've been playing tabletop roleplaying games (TTRPGs) for any length of time, there is a good chance you've either been the person or been at a table with a person who has no idea how to make a compelling character. Let's face it: Character creation takes time and skill. Often, it's easier to pluck a character like Kanye the Giant (from the excellent Key & Peele sketch, "When Hip-Hop and D&D Collide") out of the good ol' trope machine to settle in and get to the action. Take one of our go-to characters, a bard called Miley Cyrus who wants nothing more than to reach the fabled land of Las Vegas, for example. Whether it's a lack of interest, lack of time, or a desire to get to the meat of a TTRPG campaign, many of us take shortcuts when it comes to character creation, and there isn't anything wrong with that.

As you play, your choices begin to define your character. Starting with a trope is fine. It's what we add to the barebones structure of those archetypes that gives our characters depth.

CHOOSE A TROPE

An archetypal trope defines a character that fits into a pre-existing idea of what a specific sort of character might look like or enjoy. Don't know what kind of character you want to make? Start with one of five-character types: the leader, the lancer, the big person, the smart

STEP 1

Clichés are clichés because they work. Start by taking a character you love from another story or video game and roll with that.

STEP 2

Every character needs to want something. It doesn't really matter what it is. If that thing helps them make decisions, it'll work!

STEP 3

Once you know your character's motivation, use that desire to help you make choices. Don't sit back and wait. Have your character become active by choosing!

person, or the heart. If you want to play a fighter, you might try a big person. They are usually quiet, prefer solitude, and fight to defend their lives as well as the people they

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care about. Want to be the smartest in the room? Consider a smart person character. Once you've made your choice, you're set to start rolling dice. But if you're ready to bring your character up a notch, move on to the next step.

ADD MOTIVATION

The next step to developing a character is to add motivation. Choose a desire. Give them something to want. Once you know what your character wants, you will know what motivates them to make the decisions they make.

Let's take another look at Miley the bard. She did not start out wanting anything specific.

The easiest way to add motivation is to simply start asking questions of your character. Why is Miley a bard? Is it because she likes to sing? Does it help her deal with a personal trauma to tell other people's stories? She once heard tale of a magical land of secrets called Vegas. Does she want to go because she can start over fresh as someone else? What secrets might Miley have, and what does the player know about her that the other players don't?

Halrun, Dragon Knight
Warrior of the Wastes
— Alfonsus Wong





PLAYER COMPANION

The *Player Companion* lets players store and transport everything they need for game night! It also doubles as a play area with a dice tray and character sheet overlay.

Once you've arrived to play, the space inside the *Player's Companion* transforms into a dice tray which gives an incredibly satisfying sound when rolling dice.

Characters are defined by choices and how they respond to the circumstances created as a result, but they are further defined by their contradictions.

SIMPLY CHOOSE

Throughout the normal course of a campaign, your characters will make choices. Those choices might be as simple as taking a left or a right or as life-threatening as saving a burning village. Take the motivations you gave them in the previous step and use those to guide your decisions in-game.

An example: Miley just finished a show at the local tavern. She steps outside for a quiet moment to drink an ale. She hears two thieves in the alleyway talking about smuggling a magical artifact out of town. They mention the artifact can be used to travel between worlds. She is about to ask them more about it when she hears someone screaming for help in the building across the way. It's burning.

What does she choose?

The answer to that question will add dimensionality to her. By virtue of what she does, and what she doesn't, she is taking a stand in the world and defining who she is as a character. Say she chooses to ignore the cry for help and instead follows the thieves. Even if she succeeds in gaining the artifact and traveling to Vegas, she might still be haunted by the screams of the person she ignored, even as she sings night after night in a glitzy Vegas casino. On the other hand, if she saves the person and forgoes her chance at the artifact, will she regret giving up the opportunity? One need only choose to find out.



CONTRADICT YOURSELF

Characters are defined by choices and how they respond to the circumstances created as a result, but they are further defined by their contradictions. When they want one thing but choose to act in another way, it adds complexity. Let's continue with the Miley example above. We know she wants to go to Vegas more than anything, so logic would dictate she must then go after the thieves and ignore the person crying for help.

But she can't do it. Something innate to her being says that she can't ignore someone in pain. Maybe she has younger siblings who

she protected from an abusive parent growing up. Maybe she just has a strong sense of right and wrong. Regardless, she can hold two thoughts in her head at the same time: "I want to go to Vegas" and "I must help people." By weighing those desires against one another and choosing one, especially if it hurts her down the road, she becomes more defined.

WRAPPING UP

By enriching your character with backstory and conflicting needs, you set yourself up for

more harrowing interactions. The most impactful story points are the ones that cause internal conflict.

Creating big moments of emotional payoff with three dimensional characters is easier than with one dimensional characters. Having said that, if you just want to go around hitting things, then a one-dimensional character might fit the bill quite nicely. As always, it's up to you!



5 TIPS TO BECOMING A GREAT GM

Even if you don't watch or listen to the latest episodes of the most popular YouTube videos or podcasts dedicated to live-play Dungeons and Dragons, you may have noticed an expectation among some players that all D&D games should have insane production values, a thousand different voices, and the set dressing of a Broadway play. How does a GM enhance their gameplay without going overboard or breaking the bank? Let's take a look.

1 GATHER THE RIGHT PARTY MEMBERS

The first and potentially most important step to running a successful campaign is making sure the people involved want to be involved, both with you and with the other players. How? Talk to your potential players. Tell them what kind of game you want to run, whether it will be filled with comedic moments or if it is a very serious campaign adhering to a rigid history. Some people prefer campaigns with pop-culture references whereas others want a more immersive experience. By talking to your players and asking them questions, you can set the right tone early and make sure expectations are aligned.

Here are some questions you might ask, but you can ask countless more:

- What appeals to you about TTRPGs?
- How long do you want to play per session?
- How often would you like to play?
- Do you care about the internal history?
- Do you already know about the setting?
- What power level do you want to start at?

2 RUN A SESSION ZERO

Whereas the first tip had you talking to your potential players one-on-one, this one is about gathering everyone in one place to make sure you as a group understand the guidelines of the campaign and agree to them. Session Zero is the unofficial title of the first session of a new campaign during which players create characters and talk about many of the same topics mentioned in the questions above. During session zero, listen to your players. Ask them what kinds of encounters they like and what they want to get out of their roleplaying experience. If they like action-oriented combat, go for that. If they like to socialize for hours with NPCs, then come prepared. A good session revolves around the players, not the GM. Make sure to discuss real-life rules. How often do you meet? How do you cancel if you are unable to make it to a session? Everything you agree upon during the session should set and align the expectations for the coming campaign. Think of session zero as a tool to put everything on the table, so to speak, to make the game run smoother.

Listen to your players. Ask them what kinds of encounters they like and what they want to get out of their roleplaying experience.

Halrun, Dragon Knight
Warrior of the Wastes
— Alfonso Wong



GAME MASTER COMPANION

The Game Master Companion lets game masters store and transport everything needed for game night, including an innovative game master screen which elegantly wraps around the box.

3 CONSISTENCY IS KING...

As the game begins, be sure to respect the session zero. A good campaign honors the agreements made during session zero including how often to meet, how long the sessions should be, and how long the campaign should last. If your players have expressed a wish for combat, include combat. If they have expressed a wish for a lot of social encounters, include a lot of social encounters. Be sure to check your session zero document, when you prepare for a session, so that down the line you don't forget the original agreement. That way you can continuously be consistent regarding the agreed upon framework for the campaign. Remember, playing a TTRPG is a collaborative experience. It's about everyone having fun!



The included GM screen features an initiative tracker which gives both the players and the game master an easy overview of turn order. The game master screen is highly customizable with room for print out inserts and it has straps to hold onto phones/pens while playing.



4 ...BUT DON'T FORGET TO IMPROVISE

As a GM, you are creating the illusion of a world for your players. You don't need to plan out every single detail in the world to keep up the illusion of a functioning world, but you should be ready and willing to change your plans and come up with something on the fly. Don't be afraid to get inspired by the unique circumstances of the game session. Perhaps you all have started an inside joke during table talk. Incorporate that into the game if it makes sense. By creating these kinds of interactions, you are creating emotional rewards that will enrich the gameplay and make the experience a more memorable one. Whenever your players want to do something that ventures outside what you have previously been describing, do your best to go with the flow and improvise. Improvising isn't always easy, so consider keeping several random tables at hand for inspiration. At the end of this guide, you will find several

tables that can help you fill your world with locations and NPCs. Rolling dice to get a random result can often aid you in your creativity.

5 REMEMBER YOUR ROLE

YouTube channels like Critical Role play an important... role in the tabletop roleplaying game community. It has garnered massive success by attracting new players and showing them how wonderful the world of tabletop roleplaying can be. Your role, to continue the metaphor, is not to copy that experience one-for-one, but to add something to it by making it dynamic, fresh, and unique to your group. That means including your players in the storytelling and remembering that the role of a GM is not to force story beats or moments, but to allow the players enough freedom, and enough guardrails, to create memorable moments. Each game session has the potential to be the best one yet if the players feel like they are involved, that their actions and choices matter, and that the game

Each game session has the potential to be the best one yet.

was personal to them in some way. To those ends, it is your job to create interesting problems that the players can solve. Don't necessarily think about how these problems should be solved but reward your players for solving them in their own way. It is important to allow players to overcome challenges. Conflict is what drives stories forward. Resolution is what happens after. Create the conflict, but let your players come to the resolution that works for them. Forcing players to solve the problems they come across in specific ways removes their choice and leaves the players feeling like they are actors in your story, rather than engaging in collaborative storytelling.

LOCATION GENERATOR

| 1d6 | LORE | 1d6 | BIOME |
|-----|-------------|-----|-----------|
| 1 | Abandoned | 1 | Desert |
| 2 | Holy | 2 | Forest |
| 3 | Burned | 3 | Tundra |
| 4 | Cursed | 4 | Grassland |
| 5 | Consecrated | 5 | Dungeon |
| 6 | Occupied | 6 | Jungle |

| 1d6 | LANDMARK | 1d6 | POPULATION |
|-----|----------------|-----|--------------|
| 1 | Village | 1 | None |
| 2 | Temple | 2 | A Few Scouts |
| 3 | Wizard Tower | 3 | A Small Camp |
| 4 | Dragon Obelisk | 4 | A Settlement |
| 5 | Burial Mound | 5 | A Warband |
| 6 | Bridge | 6 | An Army |

NPC GENERATOR

| 1d6 | PERSONALITY | 1d6 | QUIRK |
|-----|-----------------|-----|----------------|
| 1 | Underhanded | 1 | Paranoid |
| 2 | Charismatic | 2 | Akward |
| 3 | Brutish | 3 | Greedy |
| 4 | Dull | 4 | Senile |
| 5 | Friendly | 5 | Knowledgeable |
| 6 | Confrontational | 6 | Way Too Honest |

| 1d6 | ARCHETYPE | 1d6 | DESIRE |
|-----|---------------|-----|-------------------|
| 1 | Rogue | 1 | Gold |
| 2 | Sage | 2 | A Magical Item |
| 3 | Soldier | 3 | To Go Adventuring |
| 4 | Priest | 4 | A Secret |
| 5 | Diplomat | 5 | Another NPC |
| 6 | Administrator | 6 | Information |



GAME MASTER COMPANION

ACCESSORY BOX AND GM SCREEN

Set the scene for a great roleplaying experience with this two-in-one game master screen and storage box for accessories like miniatures, RPG books, cards, dice and whatever else your adventure calls for.



PLAYER COMPANION

ACCESSORY BOX AND DICE TRAY

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