

A Librarian's Introduction to Dungeons and Dragons 5e

Tylar Kerstetter

Tylar Kerstetter holds a Master of Science in Library Science from Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Tabletop role-playing games, such as Dungeons and Dragons, provide players with a safe and friendly atmosphere to develop their social skills and cognitive abilities in a recreational fashion. As libraries progressively begin to collect and provide programming for games, the need for knowledgeable and experienced staff on the topic of games becomes apparent. For librarians who are unfamiliar with Dungeons and Dragons, it can feel like a daunting task to decide what materials are necessary and how to run game programming. This article will provide some guidance on why Dungeons and Dragons is beneficial to library patrons, what products might be useful to begin your library programs, and where to find valuable resources to help you get started.

Introduction

As libraries are continually evolving to serve the needs of their communities, their collections and services have expanded to reflect the current interests of their patrons. While books, serials, compact discs (CDs), and digital video discs (DVDs) dominate the physical materials collected, libraries also offer materials as part of a library of things initiative, such as tools, electronics, and games (Lax, 2020; Wilson, 2005). Collecting games is worth considering as games improve literacy, language skills, and critical thinking, as well as other skills (Snow, 2009; Wilson, 2005). While librarians may be hesitant to offer games and gaming programs in their libraries, the practice of offering these services has been around for decades (Nicholson, 2013).

Tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs), such as Dungeons and Dragons (D&D), have been growing in popularity after D&D was featured in series such as *Stranger Things* and *Critical Role* (Maxwell, 2023; Sinclair, 2024). TTRPGs are played by a player role-playing a character and using dice to decide if they succeed or fail at certain tasks, such as hitting an opponent with a sword or spell, sneaking past a guard, or looking for a specific object in a room. You may use other tabletop accessories, such as miniatures, to represent characters, and a battle grid, to aid in combat. TTRPGs can be played in a campaign, over many sessions, or as one-shots, an adventure that spans only one or a few sessions. TTRPG programming provides therapeutic benefits, such as escapism and socialization, which provided relief when social distancing was necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic (Baker et al., 2022; Walsh & Linehan, 2024). Thanks to the quick action of libraries across the country, TTRPG programs became available for patrons to continue socializing and playing with their peers during the pandemic through online sites and applications, such as Roll20, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Discord, and D&D Beyond (Inklebarger, 2020). After the pandemic, interest remained high and continued to grow for the TTRPG market (Benway, 2024), allowing for the increased demand for TTRPG programming.

Because of the unique and open-ended nature of TTRPGs, they allow for the development of many literacies and skills. TTRPGs develop patrons' social skills by incorporating teamwork, leadership, and working with diverse individuals into gameplay (Inklebarger, 2020; Sinclair, 2024; Snow, 2009; Torres-Roman & Snow, 2014). Players can only progress in the game if they work together, providing for the development of creative and collaborative problem solving (El-Tayib, 2020; Snow, 2009). The problems and interactions within the game provide for the development of critical thinking skills (Wilson, 2005). TTRPGs help players become more confident and build new relationships by developing their improvisation (improv) skills and improve their creativity and ability to think on their feet as they navigate multiple encounters in a timely manner throughout the game (Chung, 2013; Torres-Roman & Snow, 2014). Reluctant readers can be pushed to develop increased comprehension skills as they use rulebooks to understand the game and develop background knowledge for their character (Kurtz, 2024; Maxwell, 2023; Sinclair, 2024). These games encourage patrons to immerse themselves in fantasy novels, nonfiction, or venture online to read through adventures, supplemental character rules, or lore that they can use for their character's backstory (Torres-Roman & Snow, 2014). Math skills may increase as participants need to add numbers to calculate the effect of their dice rolls and when making

their characters (Kurtz, 2024; Sinclair, 2024; Torres-Roman & Snow, 2014). Their spatial skills may improve as they work with maps, grids, and imagining the landscape (Garcia, 2019; Torres-Roman & Snow, 2014). TTRPG programming has also shown to provide benefits to neurodiverse individuals as they aid the development of communication skills, community, empathy, and artistic freedom (Atherton et al, 2024; Fein, 2015; Maxwell, 2023).

Role-playing games can also be used for nontraditional purposes, such as information literacy (IL) instruction. Clossen (2024) provides an example of how TTRPGs have provided a medium to teach bias to students in a for-credit first-year IL class. Bias, including confirmation bias, is a difficult topic to discuss with students and can be met with discomfort. Because of this, Clossen created a bias character sheet to allow students the opportunity to roleplay in a safe environment. The character sheet asks questions related to the character's personality, values, and related elements that could provide for personal bias. Students then discussed how their characters would act or react in certain situations. This provides students the ability to safely explore bias and differing points of view as they are discussing their character's views, not their personal views. If the student's personal views are targeted, they may feel disturbed and interpret the challenge by thinking that their thoughts or opinions are wrong. By targeting the characters' views, we are allowing the students the opportunity to provide ideas or opinions to the class through their characters, which disconnects them from the exercise.

TTRPGs are not just beneficial to patrons, but to libraries as well. Offering TTRPG programs might bring in both new and returning patrons to the library. This allows the library to act as a third place and community hub for patrons to interact with their peers through TTRPGs. Patrons may view the library in a new light, and benefit from the service if they do not have any friends to play with, do not have the resources to play, or do not know about the game. These types of programs can appeal to teens and adults, and can serve as intergenerational programs. The library is also able to pass on important skills and education through the game that is hard to provide through typical library materials and programs, such as social-emotional learning. Social-emotional learning includes empathy development, teamwork, decision making, conflict resolution, consequence awareness, and many other skills.

So, You Want to be a Dungeon Master?

The idea of running a D&D session can feel overwhelming, especially if you've never played before. You might wonder what you need to play or how much it might cost to get started. Or you might wonder how you can

gain the confidence to entertain your patrons as you improvise your way through each session. But fear not, you can play the game with a zero-dollar investment, and there are many great resources out there to help you improve your confidence and knowledge of the game. You don't have to know all of the rules on day one or have everything planned out. Part of the game is making it up as you go along. The important thing is that everyone is having fun! The rest of this article will provide you with some guidance on materials needed and where to find multiple resources that can help you create your D&D library program.

Fifth Edition and Backwards Compatibility: 2014 and 2024

D&D has been through many editions. This paper will cover the fifth edition (5e) of D&D, which was published in 2014. It is important to note that there are two rulesets in D&D 5e, the 2014 rules and the 2024 rules, which I will refer to as the new rules. The new rules expand and update the 2014 rules, and are backwards compatible with the old 5e modules and expansions, which were printed between 2014 and 2024. All of the resources listed in this paper, besides the Heroes of the Borderlands Starter Set, the new core rulebooks, Dragon Delves, and the new Dungeon Master Screen, were created using or for the original ruleset, but most can be adapted to the new rules. There are many original 5e first party titles that have been stated to be fully compatible with the new core rules, such as *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*, *Candlekeep Mysteries*, *Keys from the Golden Vault*, *Curse of Strahd*, and *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos*, to name a few. You should be able to adjust and utilize these resources in your 5e 2024 games with minimal effort. Characters created using the 2014 ruleset can be played with 2024 characters as long as the new rules are used. If you are using the new rules, resources published using the 2014 rules will have to be adjusted as follows. If a rule, subclass, spell, feat, monster, etc. is different in the 2024 edition, use the 2024 edition rule. If a subclass, spell, feat, monster, etc. is not present in the new ruleset, but is present in the 2014 ruleset, then you may feel free to use that feature. The 2024 Player's Handbook has a sidebar on utilizing backgrounds and species from older books.

Materials and Resources for both Physical and Digital Play

Physical materials, such as rulebooks and adventure modules, paper character sheets, a battle mat, miniatures, dice, etc. might be what you envision when you think about D&D. Today there are also digital books and modules, digital character sheets, virtual tabletops, and dice rolling apps. You can also use a hybrid system where you combine resources, such as having digital character sheets and a battle mat with miniatures. If you want to use theater of the

mind, you can forgo the battle mat and just play with character sheets and dice. If you want to play with physical materials only, you may need to purchase materials, such as the core rulebooks or a printed ruleset, an adventure module, or a D&D starter set. You may also want sets of dice, dice trays, and a battle grid with miniatures or tokens to represent your players and monsters. Depending on how you want to play, this could be done with minimal cost. If you use just online materials, you could play with no investment necessary. If you wish to purchase first party physical rulebooks, supplements, adventures, and campaign settings, the Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) is almost always \$49.95 or more per book, but they are cheaper if you buy the digital versions, which can be purchased on sites such as D&D Beyond and Roll20. Some products and materials to consider are provided below.

Starter Sets

There are currently four starter sets that have been released for 5e: the original Starter Set (Lost Mine of Phandelver, MSRP \$19.99), the Essentials Kit (Dragon of Icespire Peak, MSRP \$24.99), the Dragons of Stormwreck Isle Starter Set (MSRP \$19.99), and the Heroes of the Borderlands Starter Set (MSRP \$49.99). These starter sets are available as digital and physical products. The first three starter sets use the original 5e rules while the newest starter set uses the new rules. Each starter set comes with a basic set of rules, an adventure module, character sheets, and dice. The original Starter Set and the Dragons of Stormwreck Isle Starter Set both come with premade characters while the Essentials Kit comes with blank character sheets for your players to create their own characters. The Essentials Kit also comes with a paper dungeon master screen, a map, and helpful cards to keep track of sidekicks, magic items, etc. The newest starter set includes a quick start guide, a rulebook, three adventure modules, 18 maps, over 200 tokens, a combat tracker, dice, and four character classes for players. These kits are made to help beginners learn how to play and guide new dungeon masters (DMs) as they learn. If you acquire a starter set, you do not have to purchase any other materials, but you may want to consider adding on some of the other items in this article. I would recommend, if you have the funds and want to run a mini campaign, starting with one of these Starter Sets to begin your DM journey. With the release of the new rules and starter set, a good starting point could be the Heroes of the Borderlands Starter Set. If you are considering one of the cheaper alternatives that use the original rules, I would consider the Dragons of Stormwreck Isle Starter Set as it has pre-generated characters, a good starter adventure, and online resources.

The Basic Rules

There are two sets of free basic rules available to DMs and players, the D&D Beyond Basic Rules (2024), which can be found at <https://www.dndbeyond.com/sources/dnd/br-2024>, and the Basic Rules (2014), which can be found at <https://www.dndbeyond.com/sources/dnd/basic-rules-2014>. These rules do not include all of the customization options that are available in the three core rulebooks, but they do include information from all three: creating and leveling up characters, DM advice, and monster stat blocks, which are character sheets for monsters. The basic rules can be helpful when you want to test the waters before making an investment in the core rulebooks, and they are easily accessible to both you and your patrons. Since the basic rules are hosted on D&D Beyond, they can be accessed on a computer, tablet, or phone.

Core Rulebooks

There are three core rulebooks in D&D: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Each of these books expands on the content in the basic rules. These books are unnecessary to get started, as all of the rules for the starter sets are included and the basic rules are provided for free. The starter sets and basic rules will be all you need to test the waters. Once your program is successful, you may be interested in purchasing a set for your games or for circulation. The *Player's Handbook* provides more character customization options (races/species, classes, feats, etc.) and other additions to help players. If you decide to upgrade to the full rules in the *Player's Handbook*, you may want to purchase multiple copies of the *Player's Handbook* for you and your players to reference. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* includes more treasure, world-building tools, and rule options. The *Monster Manual* has more monsters and stat blocks. There are both 2014 and 2024 options available for 5e. If purchasing for circulation, I would recommend the newer ruleset. If buying a copy for your table, you may buy either ruleset to meet your needs.

Expanded Rules

The content in the *Player's Handbook* will be more than enough once you move on from the free rules. It can become overwhelming to keep track of everything if your players are using features or spells sourced from multiple books. I would recommend sticking with the *Player's Handbook* for most games, and consider adding expansions once you get more experience. Every once in a while Wizards of the Coast will publish expanded or supplemental rules that can be used to change the experience of the game. Two notable expansions are *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* and *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*. These provide additional character options for players and supplemental rules for DMs, such

as feats, spells, classes, and DM tools. There is another book, *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*, that provides more races/species for your players, as well as more monsters for the DM. Consideration should go into the decision on whether or not they are right for your particular group. However, I do recommend them for intermediate to advanced groups.

Adventure Modules

There are multiple first party published adventure modules. You will need all three core rulebooks to run them, and many are meant to be run as campaigns. Some examples of campaigns include: *Curse of Strahd*, *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*, *Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage*, and *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*. However, instead of long campaigns, there are multiple first party adventure anthology books that contain short adventures with ways to integrate them into a larger game, such as *Candlekeep Mysteries*, *Tales from the Yawning Portal*, and *Keys from the Golden Vault*. There is a new anthology for the new ruleset titled *Dragon Delves*. Besides first party content, there are many more adventures available from independent creators, such as those found on DMsGuild, <https://www.dmsguild.com/>, and DriveThruRPG, <https://www.drivethrurpg.com/>.

Campaign Settings

There are multiple setting books for D&D to change up the story to meet the needs of your patrons. For instance, *The Humblewood Campaign Setting* provides patrons the opportunity to play as animals to try to save their forest home, *Explorer's Guide to Wildemount* allows players to enter the world featured in *Critical Role*, and *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos* is a setting based off of *Magic: The Gathering*, a popular trading card game published by Wizards of the Coast. Many of these campaign setting books contain a short adventure or adventure hooks to integrate into your program if your patrons are interested in a particular setting.

Physical and Digital Character Sheets

When creating characters, consider whether you want to use physical or digital character sheets. Creating a physical character sheet takes time, but it might help your players feel more invested in their characters. Virtual character sheets are easy to use and you can create a new character quickly with the tools on D&D Beyond, Roll20, or another digital character sheet application. Using a virtual character sheet also cuts down on the possibility of losing it. I prefer using paper character sheets to cut screen time and utilize the print books, but there are arguments for both methods. Instead of creating characters, you can also use premade characters. You can find premade characters and

printable character sheets for the original 5e ruleset on D&D Beyond: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/resources/1779-d-d-character-sheets>. The 2024 character sheets can be printed from the D&D Beyond Basic Rules, <https://media.dndbeyond.com/compendium-images/br/ph/character-sheet.pdf>.

Battle Grids

Ideally, if you are playing with a battle grid, you will have one that is compatible with wet and dry erase markers. Battle grids provide your patrons with a visual for their actions and for combat. I favor wet erase markers when creating maps on battle grids so they don't smudge. I would recommend a grid for most adventures, but these items can also be replaced by virtual tabletops. Some groups use 3d models and maps when playing, but these are not necessary. If you utilize theater of the mind, you can forgo the battle grid entirely. Theater of the mind is when you rely on the group's collective imagination to visualize the scene and each person describes what their character does, such as running up and attacking, picking a lock, or finding a rare book in a library. The D&D Adventure Grid, published by Wizards of the Coast, has an MSRP of \$24.95. If you want to improvise a battle grid, it is just a grid of 1 inch squares. A piece of wrapping paper, with the 1x1 inch grid on the back, taped/glued to cardboard could work. A large white board could work as well.

Miniatures and Tokens

These are used in conjunction with a battle map or grid. You can use miniatures, coins, dice, game pieces, tokens, cardboard cutouts with bases, or pretty much anything. I would recommend using dry/wet erase tokens, as you can add numbers or identifiers to easily track actions and hit points in combat, and they are a cheaper alternative to miniatures if on a budget.

Dice, Virtual Dice, and Dice Trays

If you wish to use digital materials, there are many digital dice rolling apps available. D&D Beyond and Roll20 have them integrated into the character sheets and application. If using physical resources, you will want a few sets of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, d20, and d100, a d10 with 2 digits per side). If looking for cheap dice, you can buy several sets of dice on Amazon.com for less than \$10. I would recommend 1-2 sets of dice per DM and player, with a few extra 6-sided dice. Dice Trays are nice to keep dice on the table and to help with rolling. A set of six dice trays on Amazon.com might cost a little over \$20. Dice trays can be improvised by lining a small cardboard box with felt.

Dungeon Master Screen

This useful item hides your rolls and materials from your players, but it is not necessary. The official Dungeon Master Screen does include quick rule references printed inside them, but you can print out this material instead of having a screen. If you wish to use a dungeon master screen, there are both official D&D products as well as unofficial screens that have different content or boards that you can customize. The 2014 Dungeon Master Screen Reincarnated has an MSRP of \$14.95 while the 2024 Dungeon Master Screen has an MSRP of \$19.99. You can also make your own. For instance, you can use plastic testing dividers or a trifold display board. You can then write, paste, or tape any desired information onto the board. You may have to cut these down to the desired height.

Virtual Tabletops

Virtual tabletops (VTTs), such as D&D Beyond Maps and Roll20, provide an immersive experience for both in-person and remote play through the use of digital maps and tokens. VTTs are computer applications or websites that allow players to play tabletop games in a virtual environment, whether in person or remotely. They usually include the ability to upload or create maps, add tokens, roll dice, and may even have the capability to house character sheets and books. There are many great VTTs, but D&D Beyond and Roll20 are two of the more popular options. D&D Beyond allows the use of its maps VTT for free, but requires a subscription to upload your own maps and receive other benefits like resource sharing (i.e. if one person purchases the rights to a digital book they can share it with the rest of their group). Roll20 is free to use and allows you to upload your own maps without a subscription and utilizes resource sharing, but there are subscription options if wanted. VTTs can be combined with communication softwares like Discord or Zoom to offer remote play. For in-person play, each player can have the website open on a computer, or you can project your screen and move the tokens yourself during the game. A benefit of using a VTT is that it saves your progress, so the next time you log in you will be able to pick up where you left off with minimal setup. Other virtual tabletops include Foundry and Fantasy Grounds. You will want to select the one that best fits your use case and library budget.

Dungeons and Dragons Educator Resources

At the time of this writing, new D&D Educator Kits are expected to launch in the Fall of 2025. Wizards of the Coast has provided schools and libraries with educator resources to help support new programs and clubs, which

included starter sets and physical products, digital D&D Beyond books and subscriptions, and other resources. When you begin to prepare for your program, consider the Educator Resources, as their materials could provide you with free materials beyond the basic rules.

As part of the D&D Educator Resources, Wizards of the Coast has partnered with Young Minds Inspired to provide lesson plans and other content centered around D&D. These resources are available at

<https://ymiclassroom.com/lesson-plans/dd/>.

DMs Guild

DMs Guild (<https://www.dmsguild.com/>) provides an avenue for independent content creators to self-publish supplemental rules, adventures, etc., for your games. Adventures and content published on DMs Guild may require the core rulebooks or other first party books to run, such as adventure books, but some content may only require the basic rules. Many of the products are free, pay what you want, or low cost, so you can grab new adventures, one-shots, and supplements for players to try. You can also find maps and handouts for many of the official adventures, and many of the adventures on this site have digital maps that can be dropped into VTTs. You can also find useful resources, such as initiative and combat trackers, for free or at low cost. D&D Adventurer's League content is also available on this site, which provides content for organized play. If you are looking for free or pay what you want adventures that use the basic rules, consider *A Most Potent Brew - A Basic Rules Adventure*, *Horror at Havel's Cross - A Basic Rules Adventure*, *The Hound of Cabell's Tomb - A Basic Rules Adventure*, and *The Horn of Plenty - A Basic Rules Adventure*. Others include *The Strange and Delightful Emporium: A First Time DM Adventure*, *The Wild Sheep Chase - A Single-Session Adventure*, and *The Secrets of Skyhorn Lighthouse*.

Third Party Creators

If you are looking for D&D content that you can use in your games to supplement or replace the core rulebooks, third party creators can be a great way to fill that need. They use the basic rules to create their content. Third party content can include new character options, such as classes or races, campaign settings, new monsters, adventure modules, and more. With so many creators making content, you may have more success finding material to suit your patrons that go beyond what the core rules and first party content can provide. Two third party publishers are highlighted below.

Hit Point Press

The publisher of *Humblewood*, *Big Bads*, etc., provides campaign settings, new magic items, and new monsters and bosses for use in your games. These products can make your preparation for games a bit easier as well. For instance, *Big Bads* provides information on big bad bosses that include the boss' backstory, personality, and tactics. You can access their site at <https://hitpointpress.com/>.

Kobold Press

An independent publisher that provides books and resources that provide monsters, adventures, maps, magic items, and player options, including spells, subclasses, races, backgrounds, etc. They are the publisher of *Tales of the Valiant*, an independent 5e-compatible fantasy roleplaying game. They also produce a blog, an encounter builder, game master guides, and tips for developing better monsters, worldbuilding, and roleplaying. Their site can be found at <https://koboldpress.com/>.

Resources for New Dungeon Masters

There are many resources to aid in your journey as a new DM. These include books, videos, websites, your friendly local game store, and the Games and Gaming Round Table of the American Library Association (GameRT). Below are a few resources to consider to learn more about the game.

Maxwell's (2023) *Let's Role: A Guide to Setting Up Tabletop Role-Playing Games in Your School or Public Library* is a book that provides an introduction to tabletop gaming, which includes the topic of D&D. It provides guidance on how to justify offering your program, case studies, and information on how to get started.

Alexander's (2023) *So You Want to be a Game Master: Everything You Need to Start your Tabletop Adventure - for Dungeons and Dragons, Pathfinder, and Other Systems* is a great book for new and experienced game masters. It covers the basics, some gameplay, and goes into detail on the different types of adventures you may run, such as dungeons, mysteries, and heists.

Robin's Laws of Good Game Mastering (Laws, 2002) is a 32 page book that is written for game masters who have at least a familiarity with roleplaying games. It is an older book, but the content is still relevant. It discusses different types of player styles and has advice on how to incorporate them all into a successful adventure. It is written as an overview for game masters in general, not just for D&D.

The Game Master's Handbook of Proactive Roleplaying: Guidelines and Strategies for Running PC-Driven Narratives in 5e Adventures (J. Fishel & T. Fishel, 2023) describes how to put your players and their characters front and center in your adventures. While a proactive style might not be best for prewritten adventures, there is much to learn from this book for both prewritten and homebrew adventures, which are adventures that you write yourself. The proactive approach lends itself to improvisational play, which is beneficial when working with children and teens who tend to go off-script during adventures.

Shea's (2018) *Sly Flourish's Return of the Lazy Dungeon Master* provides insight on how to run a game session with as little prep as possible. The focus of this book is on preparing the parts of the adventures that matter, and creating meaningful adventures with less preparation. You might also want to check out *Sly Flourish's The Lazy DM's Companion* and *Sly Flourish's The Lazy DM's Workbook*. Sly Flourish has some older books available under a creative commons license, which can be accessed from their site, <https://slyflourish.com/>. Additionally, they have multiple articles that could prove to be invaluable on topics ranging from beginning your first adventure to advice on how to run dungeon crawls.

Twelves' (2022) *Improv for Gamers* is a book that provides some useful improv exercises that you can incorporate into your sessions to help your players' improv skills improve and to help them become more comfortable around their peers.

What is D&D - Silverman (2023, March 31) provides an overview of D&D, which can be found here: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/posts/1480-what-is-dungeons-dragons>. This article includes text and videos on why and how you should play, as well as coverage of the different worlds and settings. This resource was created before the new ruleset came out, so the links and resources are geared towards the original rules. However, the majority of the information presented here is applicable to both rulesets.

How to be a DM - Silverman (2023, February 22) provides a resource for new DMs, which can be found here: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/posts/1452-how-to-be-a-dungeon-master>. This article provides some tips on being a DM and provides some resources on getting started with the *Dragons of Stormwreck Isle Starter Set*.

Critical Role's Handbooker Helper Playlist provides short, digestible videos that provide guidance for many basic D&D essentials. This resource was put together by Critical Role, which produces a well-known live-play show

and published game setting books. The Critical Role YouTube Channel can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@criticalrole>.

Ginny Di's Playlists for new players and new DMs provides a curated list of her videos on getting into D&D. These videos are not meant to be watched in any particular order, but are grouped together to aid DMs and players. They can be used to provide inspiration or advice to help aid in your preparation. Her channel can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@GinnyDi>.

Matt Colville's Running the Game Playlist provides new DMs with guidance on everything from setting up your first session to advice on running future sessions and handling problems. To find his videos and playlist, go to <https://www.youtube.com/@mcolville>.

RPG Bot, <https://rpgbot.net/>, provides tools and guides to help new DMs. They have a how to play guide, guides to what features are best for each of the different classes, DM tools, and player resources. This tool is great for new players as they choose options for their characters, as there are many feats and other options to consider. It may be daunting to decide what features might be useful for their character. This resource will provide a rating and some text on what races/species, feats, and subclasses work well with each class.

The D&D Beyond Forums, <https://www.dndbeyond.com/forums>, provide an area where you can find answers and ask questions to the D&D community. They have discussions for general topics as well as for each class. Anyone can read the forum discussions, but you must have a D&D Beyond account to participate in it.

Friendly Local Game Stores - If you are lucky enough to have a game store in your area, you may be able to work with them to help aid you in your collection development and programming. They may be willing to help you pick products to consider for purchase or have their staff assist in the offering of your program. They may even donate materials!

Actual play (AP) videos, podcasts, and streams provide live games for an audience to view. These types of videos, live events, and streams can prove useful as you develop your programs. You can view these events at conventions or online, such as on YouTube, Twitch, or your favorite podcast application. You can use these to get inspired and learn by watching or listening to them to help you grow your confidence.

GameRT, <https://games.ala.org>, provides resources to aid libraries in game collection, cataloging, circulation, and programming. Library staff have access to their website, Discord server, BlueSky, YouTube, and Twitch accounts. You can join GameRT for more benefits and to support the round table. GameRT has a few articles that could be of interest to the new DM. The first is Librarian's Report: Dungeons and Dragons in the Library, <https://games.ala.org/librarians-report-dungeons-and-dragons-in-the-library/>, a second one is Follow up-Librarians Report: Dungeons and Dragons in the Library, <https://games.ala.org/follow-up-librarians-report-dungeons-dragons-in-the-library/>, and a third is Ask the Hive Mind: Which Dungeons and Dragons Books are Essential, <https://games.ala.org/ask-the-hive-mind-which-dungeons-and-dragons-books-are-essential/>

Guide to Leisure Materials

If a patron's love for gaming sparks an interest in reading, there are plenty of books to satisfy their hunger. If they are interested in choosing their own destiny, then *Choose Your Own Adventure* books might be a hit. If they are fans of manga, graphic novels, or anime, *Delicious in Dungeon* and *The Adventure Zone: Here There Be Gerblins* would be good recommendations. There are also novels set in the D&D world, including the *Legend of Drizzt*, the *Dragonlance Chronicles*, and the *Forgotten Realms* series. The movie *Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves* is also available. Library staff can create displays to highlight materials that can help the players become more immersed and confident in the game. For fiction, highlight fantasy novels that have created iconic characters, such as *The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien, *Six of Crows* by Leigh Bardugo, *Mistborn* by Brandon Sanderson, and *Throne of Glass* by Sarah J. Maas. For nonfiction, the library can highlight materials that enhance improv skills, creative writing, or books on playing the game or becoming a DM.

Related Programming

Once the patrons are hooked on D&D, the library can expand their program offerings with workshops that overlap with patrons' interests: improv workshops to help further patrons' skills in developing creative ideas on the fly, DM workshops to help patrons take the leap from player to leader for both their friend group and the library, and creative writing, short story, and adventure module writing workshops to highlight patrons' imaginative stories. 3D mini printing and painting programs can be held to bring the players' characters off the page and materialized for their use in the game. Patrons may also be inspired to create artwork showcasing their character or write fan fiction about

their character's adventures. Mapmaking and worldbuilding are also popular. If patrons like technology and puzzles, have them create an escape room! Lastly, the library could offer a fan convention, which would include TTRPGs, at the library to bring in a larger crowd of players. The library can have patrons, after graduating from a DM workshop, assist by running one-shots for this event while the staff provide food, music, and prizes.

Conclusion

It is important to know that you are not alone in your interest in D&D and that your efforts will provide your patrons with the opportunity to have fun while developing useful skills. Library-based D&D programming provides players with a safe space to explore and to grow with their peers. The players may go on to play outside of the library and make friends with the people they found during the program. Game programming has many benefits that go beyond what can be taught in a formal workshop and offers a fun way to engage with others. Tabletop games' success in circulation and programming cannot be overstated; make sure they are a part of your library's offering today.

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