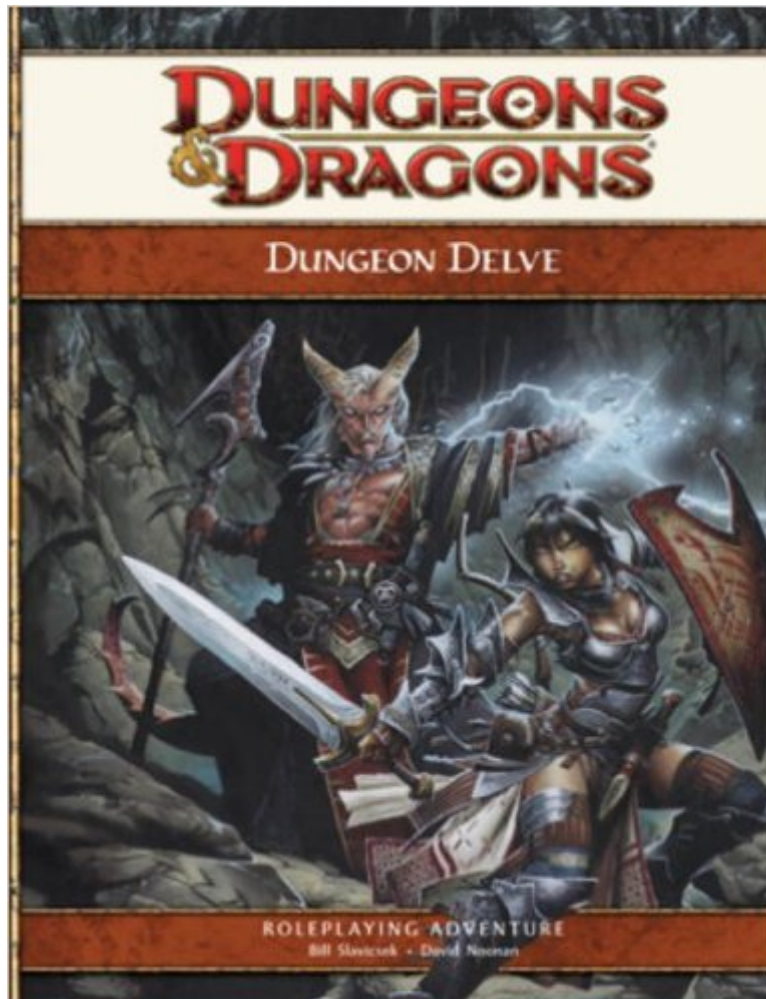


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Dungeon Delve: A 4th Edition D&D Supplement (D&D Adventure)



Synopsis

Dozens of dungeons ready to play without preparation...Dungeon Delve(TM) is designed for groups looking for an exciting night of monster-slaying without the prep time. It contains dozens of self-contained easy-to-run mini-dungeons, or "delves," each one crafted for a few hours of game-play. The book includes delves for 1st- to 30th-level characters, and features dozens of iconic monsters for the heroes to battle. Dungeon Masters can run these delves as one-shot adventures or weave them into their campaign.

Book Information

Series: D&D Adventure

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Wizards of the Coast; 4 edition (March 3, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786951397

ISBN-13: 978-0786951390

Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.6 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.7 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (32 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #353,988 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #203 inÂ Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Gaming > Dungeons & Dragons

Customer Reviews

The minute I heard about the Dungeons and Dragons Dungeon Delve product, I knew it was the product for me. While I have a nice weekly D&D game with five to six players and four hours of play time, a campaign where the PCs have just reached level 11, I always wanted something else too. I wanted a fast game, playable with fewer players in a shorter amount of time that focused on the most refined aspect of 4e, the combat system. I wanted something close to a D&D Miniatures skirmish game but with at least a little background story and a typical party of adventurers battling monsters of the depths. I had the opportunity to play the Wizards and RPGA dungeon delves at the D&D Experience and at Gencon the past few years and I was hooked. It's like speed chess for D&D. This book turns those fun fast battles into a product and it does so very well. Let me start by stating what this product is not. This product doesn't contain full length D&D adventures as we're used to seeing them. Given the high number of adventures published in print and on D&D Insider, there is no lack for full length adventures with all of the background, skill challenges, and roleplay

opportunities we've come to expect from D&D. In *Dungeon Delve*, there are few skill challenges and few stories outside of the seed to get the party into a battle. If you're expecting a book full of full-length adventures, this isn't the place to look. Each of the scenarios in *Dungeon Delve* takes up six pages, with three encounter areas, a story seed, some expansion opportunities, and flavor text. There's one delve for each level in the game, with encounters ranging from Kobolds to a red dragon and a pair of balors. Each of the delves focuses on one or two sets of D&D dungeon tiles and clearly states which tiles you need. This is the first product I've seen from Wizards that directly uses the tiles as part of the adventure and it's about damn time. It's bothered me for years that the maps in the adventures published by Wizards of the Coast never fit their own dungeon tiles and often don't fit the minis they use. The tile problem is fixed in *Dungeon Delve* but the miniature problem still exists. There are many scenarios that have monsters currently not released as D&D miniatures. In other delves, the encounter uses multiple rare minis in a single battle. Who would be willing to pay the \$80 for a pair of huge red dragons? In future products like this, I would hope that Wizards keeps their own miniature line in consideration along with the rarity of the mini. No encounter should require more than one rare miniature. So where exactly does the *Dungeon Delve* fit into your game? One way is to pull out a delve when your regular group goes off the beaten path. Perhaps they find an old abandoned wizard tower when they're exploring the big swamp. Perhaps you just want to step away from your massive campaign for a quick romp through a cursed sewer. Like the encounters found in *Draconomicon* and *Open Grave*, these quick three-room dungeons can fit into a regular campaign pretty easily. Another way to use it is for one-shot adventures. With the Character Builder now online, it's easy to whip up five quick pre-gen PCs and let your party try out some new classes. Maybe some of your old buddies are in town and want to roll some 20s without worrying about an entire adventure. Does your group want to try out those cool new Diva Avengers some night? Whip them up and run them through a delve! A third way is to play the Delves a bit more competitively. This is how I've seen it at Gencon and D&D Experience. The DM isn't your enemy, but he or she isn't your friend either. This makes it a bit more like a D&D Miniatures skirmish game, but with a story line still intact. Because the Delves are really a set of thirty mini-adventures, it lends itself very well to a PDF version. This way one can print out the six pages one needs rather than lugging the whole book around. Still, the quality of the print makes it hard to pass up the book itself. For this reason, I'd very much like to see Delves as a standard for *Dungeon* magazine online. I'm not very likely to break up my campaign to play a full *Dungeon*-published adventure, but for a quick three-encounter delve? I'd download it and play it in a second. This style of adventure could really take D&D in the right direction. *Dungeon Delve* fits a particular niche in Wizards

Dungeons and Dragons 4e lineup. It isn't an adventure and it isn't a sourcebook. It is a toolbox of encounters designed to help dungeon masters quickly throw three rooms full of baddies at your friendly neighborhood players. For the amount of content you get, *Dungeon Delve* is worth every penny. Hot * 30 delves, one for each level, with 90 total encounters for \$20 from . * A tool box of mini-adventures to drop into your existing campaign. * Uses D&D Dungeon Tiles for every map. * Effective use of terrain in nearly every encounter. * Table-friendly tips, flavor text, and seeds to get your PCs into the action. * Overuse of rare D&D Miniatures. * Often uses the out-of-print "Halls of the Giant Kings" D&D Dungeon Tile set. * No competitive rules included - just general guidelines. * No pre-gen or quick-gen character generation rules. Final words An excellent deep tool box of encounters and scenarios to fit into many places into your game. Buy it.

I'll preface this with the fact that I only ran one of the delves, the 14th level one. I read it only 10 minutes before I ran it with some friends. The book does a great job explaining the monster tactics. It reminds the DM of certain things like monster auras, and it points out quirky monster interrupts and other powers to remember. The book makes it very easy to just open the book and play spontaneously. Meaning that the next time your friend uses the excuse "DM'ing takes so much preparation and I didn't prepare anything" You can just hand him this book and say "Run this for me. It's your turn." Or if it's Saturday at 1 o'clock and you want to have some people over to play D&D you can jump right in without having to read and prepare a whole 30 pg. adventure. I find it challenging to make "fun" encounters in 4th edition. You need to combine monster roles, think about terrain features, create a challenge, and eliminate "grindspace" as its called on EnWorld. This book gives you 3 encounters for each of the 30 levels. That's 90 examples of fun challenging encounters. They all seem play-tested and polished. All the classic monsters are covered, from kobolds to goblins to red dragons to beholders to mind flayers to balors, all done right. You can learn a lot from this book on how to set up fun fights. In my opinion the best thing about the book is that the monsters have synergies with each other and their environment. They spell out the tactics and how the monsters complement each other and use terrain features to their advantage. /Spoiler:--- For example the drow will seek out a ranged party member and drop his globe of darkness hampering their ability to be effective. Then the eyeless grimlocks will charge in taking no penalty in the darkness. Then the drow will stun a player setting him up perfectly for the mindflayer who was hiding behind some pillars. ---:/Spoiler The encounters are challenging. The book helped alleviate some of my concern that the encounters in *Paragon* seemed too easy for my players. I play with some serious powergamers. They were starting to think the game was broken and you could never

die in 4E. In the delve I ran; I had a TPK, the mindflayer was able to bore into the brain of a player that was carelessly left unconscious on the floor. The mind flayer turned him into a thrall and it quickly got worse after that. The authors add suggestions to most, if not all of the delves, on how to turn each delve into a complete adventure. They give you a skill challenge, some extra random encounters, and a little story about what motivated the monsters into being there. We had a lot of fun with the book and I only opened it 10 minutes before the game. highly recommended! Revisiting this review: This book is a masterpiece of encounter design. At first, when you skim over each delve you won't see the little things that make each encounter totally awesome. Only when you run them does the difficulty pop-out and the challenge that each one introduces show through. Every delve is full of surprises and they all force the players to re-evaluate the strategy they walked in with. If you studied this book and tried to capture some of the game elements that the delves introduce, it will probably make you a better game designer.

The stated purpose of the book is to provide ready made scenarios for the busy D&D dungeon master, and the book delivers on its purpose. It is much more than that though. The book is a treasure trove of adventure ideas. If you buy just one 4th Ed. supplement this year, this should be the one you buy.

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