Dangerous Delves Quick Start Rules

A Solo and Co-operative/GM-less RPG by mick.hand@igm4u.com

What is Dangerous Delves?

A dungeon crawling role-playing game you can play by yourself or with friends, with no need for a Dungeon Master or Game Master and no need to spend time and effort preparing the dungeon.

License

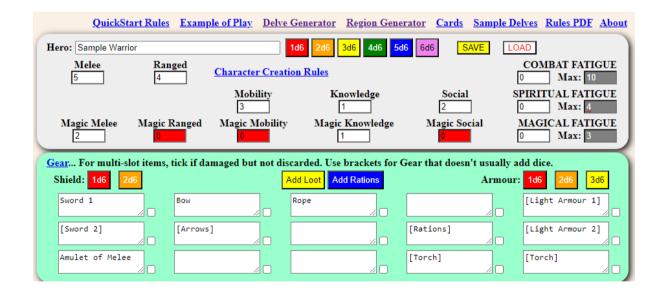
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These Quickstart Rules will focus just on a Delve and the Town. When you are ready to include the Hexcrawl (Travelling, Foraging and Exploring around the Region), you can checkout the Rules PDF for more details on that aspect of the game.





Recent Changes...

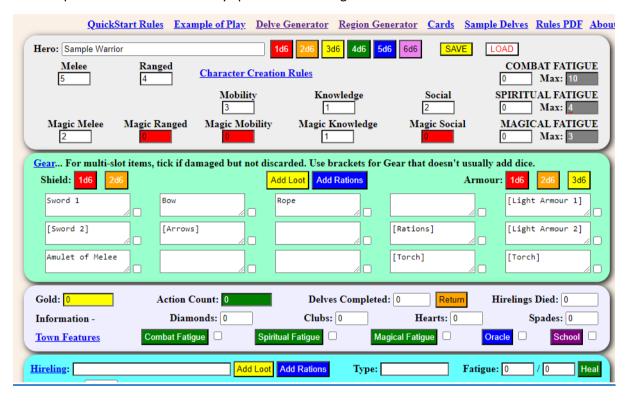
V00.95 – 2nd March 2024 – Enhancements for Deeper Delves (Better explanations, Exiting after completing a Delve, Descent is sometimes optional, sometimes forced!). Clarity on how "Pass-Through" works and how SINGLE HERO challenges work. Wizard's Staff & Art changes.

V00.94 - 26th Feb 2024 – Added rules for Deeper Delves, Advancement of Abilities beyond 5 to a maximum of 10, Special Treasures (more than one Ability, Scrolls, Bane weapons etc). Removed the option to include printing the Rules as part of a Delve.

Quick Step 1. Create a Hero

Create a character with quick and simple rules for their Abilities. There is an on-line Character Sheet at https://aigm.igm4u.com/dd sheet.html. The Sheet can save and re-load your Characters and help track everything for you. You can load a Sample Warrior, Wizard or Scout with the Online character Sheet or look at the Character Creation Section in the Rules PDF. The Abilities are briefly described further down in this document.

The Sample Characters have already spent their Starting Gold.



If you prefer to play off-line you can print off a Character Sheet from the Rules PDF (but the Online Sheet provides quick and easy tools and auto-calculations, so is **highly recommended**).



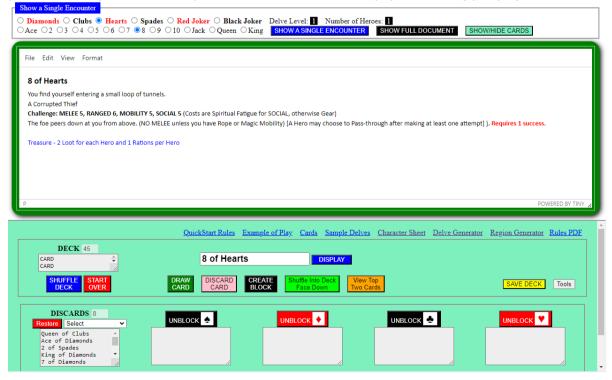
Quick Step 2. Generate a Delve

Each Delve is a perilous adventure location in a deep dark cavern or the catacombs beneath a ruined castle. You choose a name for the Delve, decide whether the Encounter Locations should be "Natural", "Constructed" or "Mixed" and can decide on the name and type of up to four of the major monsters/villains and specify which Delve Level it will be and how many Heroes will be in your Party. The Generator will create 54 Encounters, each linked to a card in a normal Deck of Cards with two Jokers. Generate infinite unique Delves at https://aigm.igm4u.com/dd_gen.html



Quick Step 3. Play through each Encounter

Play through each Encounter in turn using the Online Cards (the green section below) until you reach your chosen objective and complete the Delve. *You could use physical cards if you prefer.*



The Online Cards are opened as part of the Delve's page. (by clicking "Show/Hide Cards"). When you draw a card, click the DISPLAY button to show that Encounter.

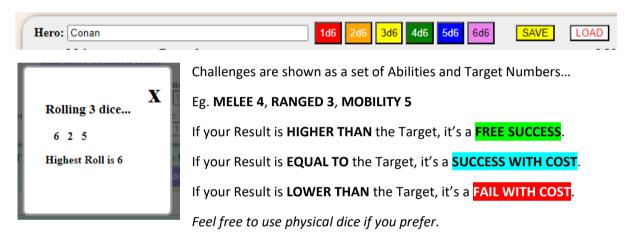
You can SAVE your Delve (and SAVE DECK) any time you want to.

If you are determined to play without digital tools you can save the generated Delve into Microsoft Word or Google Docs (or other equivalent).

Quick Step 4. Rolling the Dice

Decide how to tackle each Challenge. Decide which type of Ability to use - Melee, Ranged, Mobility, Knowledge or Social (and/or the "Magic" versions of each Ability). Get **one** dice for each of your Hero's relevant Abilities and Gear and Hirelings. Roll that many six-sided dice (maximum 6) and take the highest to see if you get a **FREE SUCCESS**, **SUCCESS WITH COST** or **FAIL WITH COST**.

You can click the buttons on the Online Character Sheet to roll dice.



When resolving all Challenges, you will roll a pool of six-sided dice and **take only the highest result on the dice**. Compare the result to the Challenge's Target Number. Challenges are described in more detail further down in this document.

How Many Dice do I Roll

You get **one** dice (I just don't like using the term "die" for a single dice even though I know it's right) for each relevant Ability (that isn't yet Exhausted) and **one** dice for each relevant item of Gear (that isn't Damaged) and can sometimes add extra dice for every Hireling with a relevant Ability.

The maximum number of dice you can ever roll is six.

Decide which of your Hero's Abilities grant you a dice. You can use the standard Ability AND the Magic equivalent of that Ability. You can only use an Ability that has not been "exhausted" (see the section on Costs) and has a rating of more than zero.

Decide which items of your Hero's Gear grant you a dice. The Gear must match the Ability you are using for the Challenge. The Gear must make "Narrative Sense". The Gear can usually only be in YOUR personal Gear Slots.

Decide which of your Hirelings will grant you a dice. Hirelings can add Dice by using their Abilities and in rare cases by using the Gear they are carrying. Finally, note whether anything in the Encounter or Monster description removes or adds any dice.

Quick Step 4. Suffer the Costs

Costs mean your Hero will either lose or damage Gear and Hirelings, or accumulate Fatigue (gradually exhausting their Abilities).

Abilities are exhausted when the Fatigue EXCEEDS the rating. With 2 points of Spiritual Fatigue, this Character's Knowledge Ability is exhausted...



With 3 points of Spiritual Fatigue this Character's Social Ability is exhausted...



One more point of Spiritual Fatigue and it will EXCEED their Mobility Ability too.

How to decide which type of Cost to take is described in more detail further down in this document.

If you are about to receive Combat Fatigue and you have Armour or a Shield, these may save you. Details are provided further down in this document.



Quick Step 5. Return to Town

Return to Town as often as you need to. Visit **The Grand Bazaar** to sell your Loot and repair, buy and sell **Gear** or get more **Hirelings**. Visit the **House of Healing**. Seek **Information** at the **Oracle**. After completing each Delve, you can try to slowly improve your Hero's Abilities at the **School of Dungeon Delvers**.



Click on "Town Features" on the Online Character Sheet for further details or consult the Rules PDF.

The Abilities

Melee

Hitting things or people you can reach.

Ranged

Hitting things or people that are far away.

Mobility

Climbing, dodging, sneaking or using lock picks to bypass something or somebody. "Mobility" encompasses a wide variety of challenges where you can use your physical non-combat skills.

Knowledge

Using your Hero's brains rather than their body to overcome, solve or find a way around something or somebody.

Social

Talking to, bribing, intimidating, charming or tricking your way past something or somebody. Sometimes, with a success at SOCIAL, you can acquire a Hireling from an Encounter.

Magic Versions of the Five Abilities

Each of the above Abilities has a magical equivalent that you can use (in addition to the standard Ability, or instead of it, if the standard Ability is not available to you)

Magic Melee

Magical weapons, magical enhancements to weapons, magical claws. It's up to you to envision what forms your Hero's "Magic Melee" takes each time you use it.

Magic Ranged

Magical ammunition, magically enhanced ammunition, magical beams and blasts. It's up to you to envision what forms your Hero's "Magic Ranged" spells take each time you use this.

Magic Mobility

Spells that enhance your Hero's movement, stealth, lock-picking or grant the ability to climb or fly or teleport short distances or walk through locked doors. You are free to envision how your Hero's "Magic Mobility" helps them approach each Challenge.

Magic Knowledge

Spells that detect things, understand how things work or reveal secrets and clues about things or people. You are free to envision how your Hero's "Magic Knowledge" spells help them approach each Challenge.

Magic Social

Spells that help your Hero talk to, bribe, intimidate, charm or trick something or somebody. You are free to envision how their "Magic Social" spells help them approach each Challenge. In some Encounters you may be able to use your Social Abilities talk a potential opponent into joining you as a Hireling.

The Definition of a Challenge

Examples of Challenges...

Trap! You find yourself in a fouled system of overlapping lava shafts.

The trap consists of a scything blade that sweeps across at waist height and is triggered by passing between two carvings on opposite sides of the way forward.

Challenge: MOBILITY 5, KNOWLEDGE 5, [Each Hero may choose to Pass-through after making at least one attempt] (Costs are any Fatigue). If any Hero gains a FREE SUCCESS subsequent Heroes may pass freely.

You have reached a fouled system of overlapping lava shafts. A green-eyed, hideous hag waving a broken bottle, appears from the darkness.

Challenge: MELEE 4, RANGED 4, MOBILITY 4, KNOWLEDGE 4, SOCIAL 5 [A Hero may choose to Pass-through after making at least one attempt] (Costs are Combat Fatigue or Spiritual Fatigue). Requires 1 success.



"OPTIONAL" Challenges

If a Challenge is defined as "OPTIONAL", you don't have to attempt it. The text will say what you can do instead. In some, you have the option to **GO A DIFFERENT WAY.** (This is a mechanic that will be explained further when you find it in an Encounter. You can also read about it in the Dangerous Delves Rules PDF, but don't worry about it now.).

Other OPTIONAL Challenges may state that you can obtain some reward for succeeding but otherwise you may simply move on to the next Encounter.

Challenges - Abilities and Target Numbers

Challenges will be defined by a list of possible Abilities you could use to defeat them. Most will offer more than one Ability (MELEE, RANGED, MOBILITY, KNOWLEDGE, SOCIAL) and most will offer different Target Numbers for some of the Abilities.

Target Numbers range from an easy 3 (easy) to a very hard 6.

6 is guaranteed to cause your Hero a Cost, because you can't get HIGHER THAN 6 on a six-sided dice, so your **best** result will be "**Success with Cost**").

For each attempt at a Challenge, you choose which Ability and use its associated Target Number to roll against.

In the first example "Challenge: MOBILITY 5, KNOWLEDGE 5" there is a "Trap" that only offers "MOBILITY" with a Target Number of 5 or "Knowledge" with a Target Number of 5. Each hero making the attempt, can choose which Ability to try for. If the Hero chooses the MOBILITY Challenge, the only Abilities they can use would be Mobility and/or Magic Mobility. The only Gear they could use would be Gear that makes "narrative sense" as helping boost their Mobility (maybe "Rope" to climb past the Trap, maybe "Good Boots" to leap out of the way).

In the second Challenge example (MELEE 4, RANGED 4, MOBILITY 4, KNOWLEDGE 4, SOCIAL 5) you could choose either Melee (and/or Magic Melee) with a Target Number of 4, or Ranged (and/or Magic Ranged) with a Target Number of 4, or Mobility (and/or Magic Mobility) with a Target Number of 4, or Social (and/or Magic Social) with a Target Number of 5.

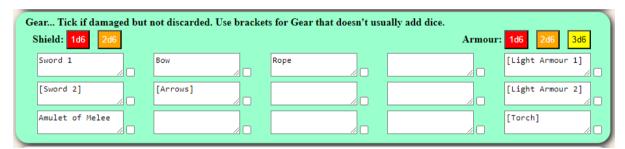
Using Gear in Challenges

As well as using the selected Ability to gain a dice for your dice pool, you can also gain an additional dice for each item of Gear you can use that is RELEVANT. Click on the word "Gear" on the Online Character Sheet to see the lists of available Gear.

In the Trap example above, the only Gear you could use would be Gear that might help you with "Mobility" (such as Rope or a Rug of Flying or Lockpicks – depending on how the Trap is described).



In the Hag example above, if you had selected Melee, you could only use Gear that might help you with "Melee" (such as a Sword, a Staff or an Axe). If you had chosen the Ranged option, you could only use Gear that could help with "Ranged" (such as a Bow or magical ring of ranged accuracy).



Gear Must Make Narrative Sense

When selecting Gear to use, you should consider if it "makes sense" and also whether your Hero has enough hands to use it.

For example, if you are faced with crossing a chasm with a MOBILITY 5 Challenge, Lockpicks aren't likely to help you, but Rope is.

In almost all Encounters in a Delve your Hero is assumed to be in the dark and needs one hand to hold a Torch. This means they can't use a Sword AND a Shield, unless they have a Hireling or another Hero, holding a Torch.

If your party has run out of Torches remove 2 dice from the dice pool. When the number of dice reaches zero, you roll 2 dice and take the LOWEST. When the number of dice reaches BELOW zero, add an extra dice for each minus number and take the LOWEST.

There is another (even more serious) penalty for running out of Torches - you might never be able to find your way out of the Delve unless you find a Torch!



Other Things that can give you Dice

There are a few other things that can give you additional dice (such as Monster Vulnerabilities) or even remove dice from your dice pool. These will be explained in the Encounter text, if and when they arise.

When you have ZERO Dice to Roll

When the number of dice reaches zero, you roll 2 dice and take the LOWEST. When the number of dice in the pool reaches BELOW zero, add an extra dice for each minus number and take the LOWEST.



Costs

When your Hero has to pay a Cost, the Challenge definition will usually tell you which type of Cost. If it doesn't specify then you can choose any type.

The four types of Cost are ...

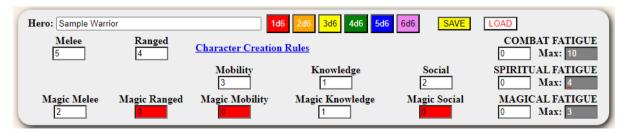
- Combat Fatigue (wounds, physical exhaustion). When you receive Combat Fatigue, if you have Armour or a Shield, they may protect you from the Cost (see below). When you EXCEED your Maximum Combat Fatigue, your Hero is DEAD!
- Spiritual Fatigue (loss of confidence, moral corruption, guilt or shame). If you can't take more Spiritual Fatigue, you lose Combat Fatigue.
- Magical Fatigue (loss of spell-casting energy). If you can't take more Magical Fatigue, you lose Combat Fatigue.
- **Gear** sometimes a Challenge will say the Costs are "**Any Gear**", sometimes a specific type of gear such as "a Torch" or "Rations".
 - o If you have no Gear of the specific Type, you can lose Any Gear.
 - o If you have no Gear at all, you lose Combat Fatigue.

Exhausting Abilities

As you can see from the top of the Online Character Sheet above, the Abilities are laid out in three separate rows.

- Melee and Ranged are in the row containing COMBAT FATIGUE (representing physical damage and weariness).
- Mobility, Knowledge & Social are in the row containing SPIRITUAL FATIGUE (representing moral corruption, stress and loss of confidence)
- The five "Magic" Abilities are in the row containing MAGICAL FATIGUE (representing loss of the energy needed to cast spells)

You "Exhaust" an Ability when the Fatigue in that row EXCEEDS the Ability Rating.



Abilities with a rating of zero are always considered as Exhausted, regardless of Fatigue.

Using a Shield

A Shield (which uses one hand) can add a Dice to MELEE Challenges AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A WEAPON IN THE OTHER HAND and MAY defend your HERO (not Hirelings) from taking COMBAT Fatigue in MELEE and RANGED Challenges.

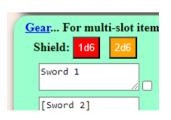
Item	Cost	Notes
Light Shield (1 Slot)	1 Gold	Can be used to add a dice for Melee Challenges AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A WEAPON IN THE OTHER HAND. It MAY protect against Combat Fatigue in Melee and Ranged Challenges. Cannot be used with a Bow. Requires a hand.
Heavy Shield (2 Slots)	3 Gold	Can be used to add a dice for Melee Challenges AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A WEAPON IN THE OTHER HAND. It MAY protect against Combat Fatigue in Melee and Ranged Challenges. Cannot be used with a Bow. Mobility Penalty (-1 dice for Mobility Challenges if the narrative requires movement such as climbing, swimming, jumping, running or dodging) Requires a hand.

^{**} If you are wearing Heavy Armour or carrying a Heavy Shield, it removes 1 dice from MOBILITY Challenges if the narrative requires movement such as climbing, swimming, jumping, running or dodging.

If you are about to receive Combat Fatigue in a Melee or Ranged Challenge in which you USED your Shield, roll 1 dice for each undamaged Gear Slot of the Shield and take the highest result.

1-3	It doesn't protect you. Cross out one Gear Slot of Shield. Don't erase it unless discarding the entire shield
4	No effect
5-6	The Shield protects you from 1 point of Combat Fatigue

If you have a shield in your Gear, and are using a hand to use it, you can use the buttons on the Online Charactersheet to make the roll to see if your Shield defends you when you are about to take **Combat Fatigue**. The example below assumes the Character has 2 slots of Shield (a Heavy Shield that is currently undamaged) ...



Rolling 2 dice for Shield...

6

Your shield saves you from Combat Fatigue.

X

Armour

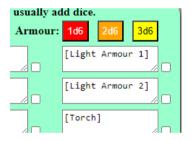
Armour is worn and doesn't require a hand. It can protect your Hero (not Hirelings) from taking COMBAT Fatigue in MELEE and RANGED Challenges. It works just like a Shield.

Item	Cost	Notes
Light Armour (2 Slots)	3 Gold	MAY protect against Combat Fatigue in Melee and
		Ranged Challenges. Does not require a hand.
Heavy Armour (3 Slots)	5 Gold	MAY protect against Combat Fatigue in Melee and
		Ranged Challenges.
		Mobility Penalty (-1 dice for Mobility Challenges if the
		narrative requires movement such as climbing,
		swimming, jumping, running or dodging)
		Does not require a hand.

If you are about to receive Combat Fatigue in a Melee or Ranged Challenge while wearing Armour, roll 1 dice for each undamaged Gear Slot of the Armour and take the highest result.

1-3	It doesn't protect you. Cross out one Gear Slot of Armour. Don't erase it unless discarding	
	the entire suit of Armour	
4	No effect	
5-6	The Armour protects you from 1 point of Combat Fatigue	

If you are wearing armour, you can use the buttons on the Online Charactersheet to make the roll to see if your Armour defends you whenever you are about to receive **Combat Fatigue**. The example below assumes the Character has 2 slots of Armour currently undamaged ...



Rolling 2 dice for Armour...

35

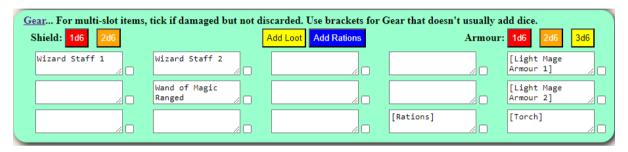
Your armour saves you from Combat Fatigue.



Buying Starting Gear and Hirelings

For the QuickStart, I'll assume you will use one of the pre-generated Characters that comes ready-equipped. You can click the word "Gear" on the Online Character sheet or consult the Rules PDF for detailed tables of Gear and information on how much Starting gold you get to buy Gear and Hirelings. Don't forget you will need Rations for each Hero and each Hireling, or they will lose Health when an Encounter tells you that "A Long Time Passes".

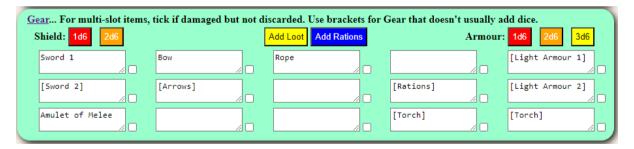
The Sample Wizard has used some of their starting money to hire a Hireling – a Porter. This Hireling doesn't have any Abilities, so doesn't add a dice to any Challenges, but can carry 9 Gear slots of Gear and Loot. They can also carry a Torch, so the Wizard has both hands free to wield their Staff AND their Wand when they are attempting a Ranged Challenge. The Sample Wizard also starts with one Magical Fatigue that can't be healed as long as they have their Mage Armour.



The Wizard Staff

The Wizard Staff is a 2-slot item that can be used to gain 1 dice for MELEE Challenges (as long as your "Magic Melee" Ability isn't exhausted). You can imagine it as crackling with energy that adds to its damage. It can also be used in RANGED Challenges (as long as your "Magic Ranged" Ability isn't exhausted). You could imagine it as helping to focus a magical bolt. I've written the two Slots in two different columns (more or less under Melee and under Ranged) to help me see more easily what Abilities it will usually help.

If a Wizard Staff is used without the use of "Magic" Melee, it is effectively just a stick or a club and allows the non-magical Melee skill to be used, **but does not add a dice.**



The Warrior's starting Gear is slightly different. The Sword adds a dice to MELEE Challenges, so I recommend writing the 2-Slot item vertically in the column nearest to Melee. It only adds 1 dice so I recommend writing the second slot in brackets as a reminder. Underneath the Sword, is the Warrior's "Amulet of Melee". This is 2 Gold item that can add a dice to one Ability (Melee) and doesn't require a hand. This is important for the Warrior as he couldn't afford a Hireling and so needs to hold a Torch in one hand and a Sword in the other.

For both the Wizard's "Light Mage Armour" and the Warrior's "Light Armour", I recommend writing the 2 slots of Armour over on the right (under the Armour buttons) and in brackets as they don't add dice to Challenges.

The Torch

The Torch is a unique item that **USUALLY doesn't** add a dice but can be used in emergencies to add a dice to MELEE or RANGED, but the Torch is destroyed if used in this way. *I recommend writing the* [Torch] in brackets as it doesn't usually add Dice to Chalenges.

If you have no Torch in your party, you get a serious penalty in ALL Challenges.

If your party has run out of Torches remove 2 dice from the pool. When the number of dice reaches zero, you roll 2 dice and take the LOWEST. When the number of dice reaches BELOW zero, add an extra dice for each minus number and take the LOWEST. You also cannot Leave the Delve until you face at least one Challenge in an Encounter on a Diamond card and succeed at it. If there are no Diamonds left in the deck, your Hero(es) may never return to the surface!

If you are using the option to include Stairs Up, and you are not at the top level of a Delve, you MAY get lucky and encounter a Way back to the Surface (or up to a higher – less dangerous level).

You MAY get lucky and wander into an Encounter where there is a Torch as part of the Loot.

You usually get a way out if you manage to COMPLETE THE DELVE by overcoming the final BOSS.

