



# Writing a Core Adventure

## An Explanatory Document for the Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ Campaign

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**Additional Sources:** *Collins Good Writing Guide*, *Iuz Adventure Writing Guidelines*, *The Elements of Style*, and *Verbobonc Writers Guidelines*.

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## FOREWORD

This document codifies the process of writing a core adventure for Living Greyhawk. In places where this document contradicts the *Living Greyhawk Writer's Guide* this document takes precedence but only for Core adventures.

Several design premises underpin this document. To paraphrase, however, adventures should be easy and fun to write, error free, quick to prepare, and enjoyable to run and play.

### 1: Simple is Good

I'll say it again: simple is good. A basic premise of successful business is: Keep It Simple (Stupid), or KISS. Why is complicated better than simple? Simple is not boring (or it shouldn't/needn't be). It also is not necessarily bad if it is just simpler.

### 2: Adventure Writing is not a Contest

D&D should be challenging but fair - without fair challenge a lot of what makes D&D fun disappears.

Encounters that ignore circumstance modifiers are unfair. Authors seeking to demonstrate their superior mastery of the rules by building unstoppable killing machines are not designing enjoyable adventures.

Encounters set at APL +4 are intrinsically unfair because of the variation in table composition in Living campaigns. Such a high EL in relation to APL increases the odds that a group will lack the vital ability or spell required to defeat their opponent.

### 3: Accessibility

This campaign has to stay accessible to new blood as well as enjoyable for old-timers. Slaughtering every party of new players who try the campaign because they didn't know to optimize their characters or annihilating a party of old-timers who are unlucky in party composition, make a few mistakes, or who are just really unlucky is not going to keep the campaign dynamic and fun. It is going to drive people away.

### 4: The DM Should Engage his Players

Anything we can do to make running the game easier for the DM is a good thing because it frees him to concentrate on providing an enjoyable play experience for the players (and herself). A DM poring through a stat blocks to find a good action to take, or to check an opponent's immunities or DR is not engaging with his players.

### 5: Succinct writing is Good. Wordy prose is Bad

Why use 20 words when 10 will do. Clear, succinct writing is easier for the reader to understand than long, rambling "epics".

## ADVENTURE COMPONENTS

All core adventures must include several components: a title, blurb, background, encounters, and so on. Additionally, authors must give detailed thought to such subjects as the EL of encounters, the type of opponents faced, and the amount (and type) of reward available to the PCs. These subjects are fundamentally important to all adventures.

Some additional notes regarding these subjects appear below. Refer to the "Adventure Component" section for additional information on opponents, ELs, and rewards.

### ADVENTURE TITLE

An adventure's title should be short, snappy, and atmospheric. Do not use "joke," "zany" titles, or real-world references. Good titles help the players and DM get into the proper frame of mind.

### ADVENTURE BLURB

The blurb should give a prospective player a good idea of the general theme and content of the adventure without giving too much away.

Your blurb should be short (75 words maximum) and to the point. Your blurb must contain the phrase: "A one/two-round core adventure set in location for characters level X-XX (APLs X-X)."

### SOURCES

Cite your sources for the adventure. This information must appear on the adventure's cover. The 2007 core adventure template provides placeholder text for this. Include both setting-specific and rule-specific sources. For example:

- *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* [Gary Holian, Erik Mona, Sean K Reynolds, Frederick Weining]
- *COR3-13 Traitor's Road* [Paul Looby],
- "Into the Bright Desert" in *Dungeon Magazine* 98 [Creighton Broadhurst]<sup>1</sup>,

1: Use this format for referencing *Living Greyhawk Journal* sources.

When referring to another core adventure in your adventure use the adventure's full name and code, for example: *COR5-19 Retribution*.

When referring to non-core books use the book's full name: for example, *Libris Mortis* or *Monster Manual III*.

When referring to a core book abbreviate its title: for example, PH, MM, DMG.

### WORD COUNT

Avoid tautology, repetition, and the inclusion of interesting information not actually relevant to the

adventure. The maximum recommended word count for a core adventure is:

- **One-Round:** 25,000 words.
- **Two-Round:** 47,000 words.

Word count includes boilerplate text, appendices, stat blocks, and so on. It assumes that the adventure supports four APLs. Add 3,000 words per additional APL to reach your maximum recommended word count.

**Behind the Curtain:** This is a controversial subject. Here are our thoughts on the subject:

**World Building:** World building is good. It adds verisimilitude to adventures and increases player enjoyment and immersion in the game setting. Excessive world building detracts from the adventure and can bombard the DM with extraneous information. For example, an adventure takes place during winter in a temperate land (say Furyondy). The author does not need to describe the day-to-day weather unless it is vital to the story as almost all DMs can add-lib this information.

**Usability:** Large documents take longer to read and assimilate. Repeating information throughout the adventure slows a DM down when he is running the adventure and can result in lost information or information overload. State information clearly once and move on. Subsequently, refer the DM back to the initial section containing the information if you want to include a reminder.

**Cost:** The longer the adventure, the higher the printing cost.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Include a full rundown of the history to your adventure. Include all information for the DM. Except in the case of an adventure in a series do not keep secrets from the DM.

## ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Include a brief outline of the expected course of events. You do not have to break the adventure down encounter by encounter, but you should provide the DM with a summary of the normal (or expected) course of the adventure.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Include any notes that help the DM prepare more effectively. Note any rules that might be useful to revise for a DM – such as fighting underwater. Also, include details of any AR Items from previous adventures that are pertinent to your adventure.

## INTRODUCTION

This encounter sets the scene, gets the PCs together, and usually introduces them to their patron and mission. Most players can invent a good reason for

their PC to have traveled to any given locale. If your adventure takes place in a particularly odd or out-of-the-way place, provide sample hooks.

If the adventure is part of a series include adventure hooks for both people who have and have not participated in previous parts. Provide troubleshooting tips to make the adventure as inclusive as possible. For example, explain why chaotic characters would help the temple of St. Cuthbert in Greyhawk City.

## EACH ENCOUNTER

Each encounter should have an appropriate atmospheric title. Although the players will likely never know its name, this helps the DM set the mood. Do not use “joke” or “zany” titles as they distract DMs from running the adventure and in-jokes will be lost on many DMs.

**Read Aloud Text:** Read aloud text should be brief, clearly written and contain all relevant information for the PCs. Aim for no more than two or three sentences. Do not assume PC actions, reactions, or feelings.

**Maps:** A clearly drawn map must support each combat encounter.

## CONCLUSION

This section concludes the adventure. Include text handling both the PCs' success and failure.

## CAMPAIGN CONSEQUENCES

Campaign consequences keep the campaign dynamic and give the players a sense that their actions have a bearing on future events. Include a number of questions relevant to your adventure. For example: was the main villain slain?

## XP AND TREASURE SUMMARIES

These sections summarize all the XP and treasure in the adventure. Refer to the 2007 Core Adventure Template for more information.

# ADVENTURE MECHANICS

## APL BANDING

The APLs of standalone core adventures are generally tightly banded. This has several benefits:

- Keeps the story tightly focused and reduces the number of bizarre encounters featuring opponents that work at one APL but scale up ridiculously.
- Keeps the items listed on the AR to a manageable level.
- Reduces stat block errors.
- Keeps the number of new rules items to a reasonable number.

**APLs 2-8:** These adventures are set in the Free City of Greyhawk, and/or its Domain.

**APLs 2-12:** These adventures are set in the Wild Coast and the Orcish Empire of the Pomarj. They can also feature the Free City of Greyhawk and its Domain.

**APLs 10-16:** These adventures are set in the Great Kingdom of Northern Aerdy.

**Adventure Series:** Proposed adventure series do not have to follow these banding guidelines and can be set in any core region.

### Adventures for the “Big Cons”

Adventures premiering at one of the big conventions – the Gen Cons, Origins, and Winter Fantasy – must support APL 2.

**Gen Cons and Winter Fantasy:** Two adventures support APLs 2-8. The other supports APL 2-12.

**Origins:** One of these adventures supports APLs 2-8 and the other supports APL 2-12.

## ENCOUNTER LEVELS

The APL of a Living Greyhawk adventure caps how many ELs it can include. The maximum ELs supported by APL are:

APL	One-Round	Two-Round
2	12	24
4	18	36
6	24	48
8	30	60
10	36	72
12	42	84
14	48	96
16	54	108

Recent adventures have shown a tendency to mainly feature APL+2 EL combat encounters. Thus, combats are more difficult but there are fewer of them in an adventure. DMG 49 recommends that half of an adventure’s encounter ELs should equal the APL of the party.

### Low-Level Play: APLs 2-8

When designing your adventure try to have at least two encounter’s EL equal the APL.

An APL 2 adventure should not feature the following encounters: EL 4, EL 4, and EL 4. However, EL 2, EL 2, EL 4, and EL 4 could be appropriate.

Use APL +3 sparingly and almost always for the adventure finale or other important combat.

### High-Level Play: APLs 10-16

EL = APL encounters are easier for a high-level party to overcome than a low-level party. Thus, in high-level adventures EL +2 for a normal fight is acceptable. EL +3 is also acceptable.

### General Notes

Remember that occasionally the PCs get the drop on their opponents. Exceptional circumstances or

particularly favorable (or unfavorable) terrain can alter the challenge of an encounter (DMG 50). Consider this when ELing your encounters.

Finally, consider how long each combat takes to run. A one-round adventure should be playable in about four hours. Making all of your combats run long or complicated is going to make this very difficult to pull off. For example, encounters in areas that provide concealment (like heavy mist) or in areas that impede movement take longer to run. The occasional encounter like this is fine, but having three or four in an adventure could cause the DM (and convention organizers) scheduling problems (and could be very frustrating for players).

Do not include any combat encounters in your adventure that are APL +4.

## OPPONENT SELECTION

D&D is about options and the Living Greyhawk campaign has a vast number of allowable rules resources. Think carefully about the opponents in your adventure. Pay particular attention to classed, advanced opponents, or creatures from a non-core book. All such opponents require a full stat block - see “Including New Rule Items” for more information on this. Full stat blocks can run to over 500 words (more at higher APLs), so plan your opponent selection accordingly.

Do not make combats particularly complicated to run. Examples of complicated encounters include those featuring multiple classed individuals or a disparate group of monsters all with different abilities.

Consider carefully the number of opponents in an encounter. Using 12 standard orcs instead of a lesser number of classed orcs slows combat down simply by forcing the DM to roll scores of attack rolls. Save encounters with large numbers of opponents to showcase hordes of undead or rank and file members of a humanoid tribe. Complicated classed individuals, and by this I do not mean a group of gnoll fighter 1, should appear in groups of no more than three. Avoid placing singular opponents; PCs often overwhelm them through sheer weight of numbers.

Wherever possible choose feats for an NPC that are easy for the DM to adjudicate. For example, Alertness, Great Fortitude, and Improved Initiative are good feats to choose because their results are already included in the stat block.

Remember that each opponent must make sense within the overall theme of your adventure.

To help the DM run encounters smoothly consider adding detailed tactics for your NPCs. Do not include encounters with multiple complicated opponents with multiple special abilities.

If it doubt, keep it simple (but challenging).

**Optional Rules:** Before you include rules from non-core sources, such as *Complete Warrior*, consider their impact on the encounter particularly in terms of keeping the encounter “DM friendly.” Include only such items that work well in your adventure.

**Ability Arrays:** Except in exceptional circumstances (such as when presenting an established Greyhawk NPC) use the elite array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8) for any creature advanced by HD or character class. Use the nonelite array (13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8) for opponents with levels in a NPC class. Use the elite, nonelite, or standard array (all scores 10 or 11) for creatures improved with a template.

Use the best array available for a given creature if it qualifies for more than one array. For example, use the elite array for a goblin adept 1/fighter 2.

## TRAPS

Avoid pointless traps wherever possible. Sure, some traps makes sense (like a locked and warded chest) but use such sparingly. Such encounters are often over very quickly and there is little, or nothing, that the PCs can do to influence them beyond making, or failing, their saving throw. Instead, employ traps which the PCs can interact with.

**Example:** A PC triggers a pit trap, which drops him into a water-filled chamber. He takes no damage from the fall, but his arrival awakens several zombies.

## DM FRIENDLY

Try to make your encounters as “DM friendly” as possible. If an encounter calls for a special set of rules, for example, fighting in water, explain these briefly and provide a page reference so that the DM can quickly access them if required.

**Example:** Standing in a square full of stalagmites provides cover in the same way as a square containing a slender pillar (+2 cover bonus to AC, +1 bonus on Reflex save; these bonuses do not stack with other cover bonuses - DMG 64).

## ASSUMPTIONS

Do not assume that every party has access to a specific spell, feat, or magic item. Many will not. For example, do not assume that every APL 2 party has access to the kind of weapon required to defeat an opponent's damage reduction (or even the spell *magic weapon*).

Do not design an encounter that assumes that a member of the party can make a high DC skill check in a certain feat. For example:

- Do not design an encounter, at which the PCs can only succeed with a high Diplomacy check. Build in an alternate solution (perhaps in this example a successful Intimidate check which is a class skill of other base classes that do not normally have Diplomacy as a class skill).
- Do not include a vital encounter that requires the PCs to succeed on a tracking Survival check above DC 10.

## TREASURE LEVELS

During an adventure, characters find treasure, usually in the possession of their foes. They can also get paid by their employer, loot the remains of other less fortunate adventurers, and so on.

Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description.

The APL of a Living Greyhawk adventure caps how much treasure the PCs can gain. The maximum treasure amounts allowable are:

APL	One-Round	Two-Round
2	450 gp	900 gp
4	650 gp	1,300 gp
6	900 gp	1,800 gp
8	1,300 gp	2,600 gp
10	2,300 gp	4,600 gp
12	3,300 gp	6,600 gp
14	6,600 gp	13,200 gp
16	9,900 gp	19,800 gp

Do not put all, most, or even half of an adventure's total treasure in a single encounter.

**Overcap Treasure:** Overcap treasure has become the norm in recent years as the average EL of encounters rose above APL. (Overcap treasure allows PCs to have spells cast upon them to break curses, remove enchantments and so on. Its prevalence is a symptom of increasingly difficult combats). This significantly reduces an adventure's challenge as often the PCs are healed or returned to life “for free” using the overcap treasure.

Given the normalization of EL against APL include as little overcap treasure as possible.

## NON-COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Not all encounters must feature combat. PCs need to meet NPCs, gather information, purchase equipment, and so forth. Indeed, an adventure consisting of nothing but combat could be boring. Additionally, consider ways that groups could overcome or bypass an encounter using diplomacy, trickery, nonlethal force, and so on. Reward the PCs for doing so if appropriate. For example, the PCs must infiltrate a castle. They can do so by force or they could bribe or sneak their way in.

## AR ITEMS

AR items are special items, favors, and so on that the PCs can gain during the adventure. Suitable rewards include access to non-core items, prestige classes, spells, feats, and so on. Circumstance bonuses to skill checks or help in future adventures are also suitable.

Think carefully before including AR items that grant special powers (such as the ability to cast *cure moderate wounds* once only). If you wish to include such items, price them as a magic item. No such item may have a cost greater than the treasure cap of the adventure's lowest APL unless the item scales with

APL. Such items may not break the gp APL cap of a PC gaining the item. A PC gaining such an AR items has its value deducted from the maximum amount of gold she can gain from the adventure.

**Example:** The Favor of the Shining One allows a PCs (not just those with it on their spell list) to cast *cure moderate wounds* once only as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Thus, the item's cost 300 gp. (Single use, use activated item [2 {spell level} X 3 {caster level} X 50 gp]). An adventurer playing at APL 2 buying this item could receive a maximum of 150 gp of additional treasure.

**Free Items:** Do not include AR items that give the PCs free items, unless the cost and benefit is negligible (such as a decorated nonmagical dagger).

**Space Constraints:** Space in the Adventure Information section of the AR is limited. This box can hold a maximum of around 450 words (or 2,400 characters – including spaces). Plan accordingly.

## ITEMS FOUND DURING THE ADVENTURE

PCs find magic items during their adventures and you should aim to provide a good selection. However, again, space in this is limited. Assuming an adventure supports four APLs there are only 20 lines of text available on which to list found magic items. Plan accordingly. Only include CL and cost information of non-standard items. For example:

+2 *greatsword* (Adventure; DMG)

*Wand of bull's strength* (Adventure; CL 4th; 6,000 gp; DMG)

## ERRATA

Always check to make sure that your adventure uses the latest applicable errata. Official errata can be found on [www.wizards.com](http://www.wizards.com).

## APPENDIX 1: SUBMISSION PROCESS

This section details the process you must follow to submit a core adventure proposal. We are not currently reviewing any core special submissions.

Currently, we only accept core adventure submissions from proven Living Greyhawk writers. This means that you must have authored at least one regional or meta-regional adventure sanctioned for campaign play. We do not accept submissions from authors of regional interactives, special missions, or the like.

If you have not yet written a core adventure, you may only submit a one-round proposal.

If you have already written a core adventure, you may submit a proposal for an adventure series, or a two-round adventure. The schedule only allows for three two-round adventures; normally these are part of ongoing series.

### SUBMITTING A SINGLE ADVENTURE

To submit either a standalone one- or two-round adventure, follow these guidelines:

- Come up with a cool idea.
- Do your research. Check Greyhawk and Living Greyhawk canon. Remember that if you plan to write an adventure in a well-developed area such as the Free City of Greyhawk or the Bright Desert that many adventures have already been set there. If you plan to include story elements from a triad-run region, get their permission to do so. Note in your submission that you have said permission.
- Flesh out your idea to include a by-encounter breakdown. Use the Core Adventure Proposal document for this.
- Create a plain text file named “[Adventure Name] Author Details”. Insert your full name, physical address, email address, and RPGA number.
- Submit your adventure idea in a Word-compatible format to [creighton@greyworks.co.uk](mailto:creighton@greyworks.co.uk) along with the adventure’s author details file and a proposed (and realistic) timescale for adventure completion. (This means that your final draft is complete and has been playtested). Add a read receipt to your email if you want confirmation that we have received it.
- **First-Time Authors:** First-time authors must also include a sample of their work. Include a PDF of the final adventure along with a copy of the word document you sent off for editing.
- Wait patiently. We will respond to your submission within one month. If we do not respond, poke us with a sharp stick (or another email).

### SUBMITTING A SERIES

To submit an adventure series follow these additional guidelines:

- The series must have no more than three parts.

- Include full adventure summaries of all parts of your series with your initial proposal. Use a fresh Core Adventure Summary file for each part.
- Include an overview of the series plot in a separate file.
- Include a proposed schedule for the series. Remember to scale the adventures so that characters playing in the first part can realistically finish the series.

### GENERAL NOTES

Here are some additional guidelines for your submission:

- Incorrectly formatted proposals will not be considered; following this submission process demonstrates that you can follow guidelines.
- Use a spellchecker set to American English. Do not use contractions. Write “does not” instead of “doesn’t”.
- Do not propose a plot, for either a series or standalone adventure, which has serious Oerth-shaking consequences. For example, do not unleash a deadly plague on the Flanaess, release an imprisoned god, start a war between two countries, and so on.
- Wherever possible keep your core adventure out of any triad-run area.
- Avoid clichés like the plague.
- Do not submit ideas that are more suited to other game worlds.
- Do not submit any automatic death situations. Such situations are grossly unfair and are removed in editing. PCs embarking on a plainly suicidal course of action should be deflected from their goal, or suffer some other nonfatal, but tangible, penalty (such as being incarcerated and suffering an appropriate loss of TUs).
- Do not submit ideas that include other setting-specific monsters (for example the warforged from Eberron), magic items, or spells.
- Do not ignore, violate, or rewrite D&D core rules.
- Do not include pop culture references.
- Do not design a new monster, spell, or feat for inclusion with your adventure.
- If you design a new magic item, follow the guidelines in the DMG and show your math.

### WORKING ON A SUBMISSION

If we accept your initial adventure proposal, we will likely ask for a number of changes to your original submission. Don’t be offended by this; often we like to include references to other adventures, events or, NPCs that we might want to use in the future.

At this point, we will also agree with you a premiere date and confirm the various milestone dates that you

must hit. Additionally, at this stage a core editor will be assigned to work with you. He is your point of contact through the writing process.

Once we have agreed on the final details of your proposal we will agree a premiere date and the various milestone dates that you must hit.

During the writing process, you must provide at least two draft versions of your adventure to your core editor. Provide your editor with the first draft before your adventure is playtested. Core adventures must be play tested at least once. If you cannot organize a playtest we will arrange one for you. Ideally (and if time permits) we prefer to run multiple play tests of an adventure at different APLs to make certain that the adventure works at all supported APLs.

Once all playtests are complete, begin work on your final draft. Your final draft should build on your first draft taking into account playtester feedback and your core editor's comments. Before turning in your final draft, check its spelling and grammar.

## **DRAFTS AND VERSION NUMBERS**

Identify the stage at which your submission is by using version numbers. Use the following system:

- 0.1: Initial proposal document.
- 0.5: Pre-first playtest version.
- 0.7: Post playtest version.
- 0.8: Final version to core editor.
- 0.9: Final draft to Creighton.

## **SUBMITTING YOUR FINAL DRAFT**

To submit a draft core adventure follow these guidelines:

- Submit all final files in a zip file named after your adventure.
- Send the zip file to your core editor. Once he has finished his final edits he will pass it onto the Core Supremo.

Include the following files:

- Resubmit the [Adventure Name] Author Details file. (Your address could have changed since you started writing).
- The final draft in Word format.
- Jpgs of all included graphics and maps.



## APPENDIX 2: FREQUENT FORMATTING ISSUES

This appendix lists frequent formatting issues that severely slow down the sanctioning process. Refer to this appendix when writing your core adventure.

**Adventure:** Core adventures are not referred to as “modules,” “Mods,” or “events”. They are adventures.

**Character Class:** Use the full name for character classes; for example, “fighter” instead of “Ftr.” Do not capitalize class, NPC, or prestige class names.

**Magic Items:** Spell names are never capitalized unless the spell contains an individual’s name and are always italicized; for example “*bracers of armor +1*” not “Bracers of Armor +1”.

**PCs:** Except in read loud text refer to PCs as PCs. Do not use “heroes,” “adventurers,” or the like.

**Race and Language:** Do not capitalize race names, for example “halfling” but do capitalize languages, for example “Common”.

**Skill and Feat Names:** Always capitalize feat and skill names; for example, “Power Attack” instead of “power attacks.” Exception: When a skill or feat name has information in brackets that portion of the name is not capitalized; for example, “Knowledge (religion)” and “Profession (miner)” instead of “Knowledge (Religion)” or “Profession (Miner)”.

**Skill Checks:** Present skill checks thus: “DC 20 Knowledge (religion)” not “Knowledge (religion) DC 20”.

**Spells:** Always italicized spell names but never capitalized them unless the spell contains an individual’s name; for example, “*magic missile*” and “*Mordenkainen’s faithful hound*” instead of “Magic Missile” or “Mordenkainen’s Faithful Hound.” List spells alphabetically by level. When determining the correct order to list spells, ignore the name of any applied metamagic feat.

**Stat Blocks:** Closely follow the template and example full stat block presented in the core adventure template.

### INCLUDING NEW RULE ITEMS

Follow these guidelines when including new rule items in a core adventure:

**Spells, Feats and Magic Items:** Include the full text of these items as presented in the relevant book. Include source and page number. Present this information, broken down by type, in Appendix 2: New Rules Items.

**Classes, Prestige Classes, Templates and New Monsters:** All information required by the DM to run the creature at a given APL should appear in its stat block. Describe its appearance, mannerisms, and tactics in the main body of the encounter. Do not include a full write-up of these items in Appendix 2: New Rules Items.

### USE OF TEXT STYLES

The Core Adventure Template uses several text styles and writers should use these. Do not invent your own styles

or modify existing styles. Here are some brief notes detailing the correct use of each style.

Do not indent the first paragraph of a new section of the read aloud or normal styles. Use one space between sentences.

- **Heading 1:** Use this style for encounter and appendix titles.
- **Heading 2:** Use this style to subdivide an encounter into important sections. Do not use this style to title the treasure, development, or tactics section of an encounter.
- **Heading 3:** Use this style to present encounter titles in the treasure and experience point summaries. Also, use it to subdivide important sections headlined by “heading 2” text.
- **Heading 5:** Use this style to note an encounter’s APL and EL when listing the PCs’ opponents by APL.
- **Normal:** This is the default style of the document. If you are not specifically using one of the other styles use this one.
- **Read Aloud:** Use this style to present any player read aloud information.

### TENSE

Write in the present tense, particularly when describing NPCs’ actions. Avoid words like “will,” “shall,” and “was.” For example, instead of saying “If the PCs enter the room the orcs will attack them,” say “If the PCs enter the room the orcs attack them.”

### BE ACTIVE, NOT PASSIVE!

Active sentences are shorter and more efficient, interesting, and lively than passive sentences. This “voice of the sentence” determines whether the subject *acts* (active) or is *acted upon* (passive). For example:

- **Passive:** The door is opened by the orc.
- **Active:** The orc opens the door.