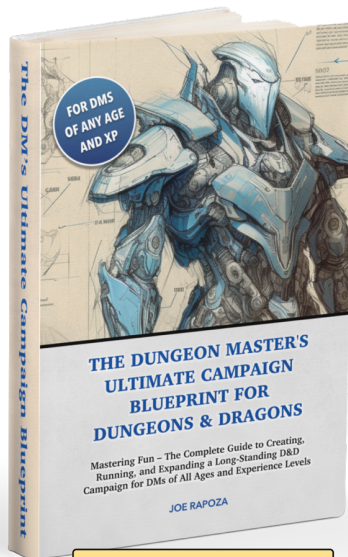


# “The Dungeon Master's Ultimate Campaign Blueprint for Dungeons & Dragons”

Mastering Fun – The Complete Guide to Creating, Running, and Expanding a Long-Standing D&D Campaign for DMs of All Ages and Experience Levels



NOT FINAL ART

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# The 12 Player Archetypes (Free Chapter Preview)

I've identified 12 player archetypes. This covers the majority of how most players act during a typical gaming session and will help you identify what motivates them to play. You want to be sure you don't stereotype your players and keep them trapped in one of these categories forever. Many players are a combination of some of these 12 types but many will lean in 1 direction most of the time.

**The Hoarder** - this player type is someone looking for loot and other interesting artifacts and trinkets. The hoarder collects things of obvious value like money, magical weapons, scrolls, gems, jewelry.

But, many of them will also collect the mundane that may not have much if any value in your game world. Things like:

- feathers (could be a material component)
- dragon scales (I can make a shield)
- basilisk blood (maybe it can be made into a potion?)
- rocks (it's a low maintenance pet!)

Be careful what you describe in your game world, because the hoarder may get quite encumbered.

**The Explorer** - Explorers are tenacious and curious. They love travel and enjoy exploring new things. They can be a bit anxious at times if the party stays in town for too long, drinking in taverns, shopping for potions and scrolls, or anything else that stifles their ability to "see the world."

You may have to do some extra planning for the explorer type.

They tend to seek adventure beyond the sandbox of your world and you don't want to become known as a lazy DM.

Explorers will think every nook and cranny is explorable, so be careful what you describe.

If you're not prepared to ad-lib, you may catch yourself saying, "I wasn't planning for you guys to explore that today. Actually, it's boring and it shouldn't be there. Best to ignore it."

This can be a rather common, yet embarrassing situation for a new DM.

**The Danger Seeker** - "I charge and stab the ancient dragon with my dagger!"

You may want to suggest to the danger seeker to roll up a backup character, just in case things get dicey (no pun intended. Just kidding. That was totally intended.)

But seriously, danger seekers are similar to explorers but they're also unafraid to jump head first into a pool of boiling lava if they think it'll be fun. If you think the explorer gets antsy when sitting around a tavern or some "Ye Olde Potion Shoppe" then you're in for a treat when you meet this player type.

**The Student** - This player loves to learn. They'll take an interest in the crunch and lore of your game world. Like the explorer, they want to see the world so they can learn from all its wonders.

They're so curious they may ask you the most surprising things.

Things like, "That fountain you described last session, you know the one in the town square, what's its history and significance? Was it made by some freemason crafts guild? How old is it? What do the townsfolk think of it? Has it ever dried up or was it always filled with water?"

You may not have thought about any of these details yourself but you can definitely learn from the student. They'll sometimes give you some great ideas so listen closely to what they ask.

**The Clown** - everyone loves a clown, right? Well, not so much if you're the DM. Clowns are players who joke around. Like, a lot. They're always saying or interrupting the session with meta-game comments, jokes, or general inappropriateness.

It's best to handle these players before the start of every game session by going over the house rules as a reminder. You don't want to stifle laughs, fun, or player creativity by not

allowing any type of side humor, but it can be distracting to the other players so rules are key to ensuring it doesn't get out of hand too quickly.

If you identify a clown in your group, just be honest about your expectations. Everyone wants to have fun but not at the expense of the other players, and surely not at the expense of you, the DM. Your job is tough enough as it is.

**The Adapter** - these are some of the most flexible players in any gaming group. The adapter is there to have fun and wants everyone else to have fun too. They're okay taking last pick of their character class and race.

If the party needs a short and stout healer, they'll play a dwarven cleric. They're also less likely to get into an argument or take sides when other players bicker. Adapters can be the voice of reason and act as an unbiased judge when trying to solve disagreements. They tend to follow what you say as the DM and will rarely "rules lawyer" you into submission.

As a DM it's nice to have an adapter in your group.

**The Sneak** - these players are quiet, unassuming, and amazingly sly. These are the players who will slip you a secret note under the table, or whisper in your ear when you're on a quick break.

During a dungeon expedition, they're the players most likely to wander off by themselves to find the cool stuff (i.e. treasure) without anyone else noticing. In most cases they don't intend to keep things to themselves, they just want to be the first ones to find things.

But, wandering off without the party can be dangerous. Maybe it's a good idea for sneaks to have a back-up character as well. 😊

**The Mischief Maker** - similar to the clown, this player archetype may pull off pranks and create silliness in both worlds (the real and the imaginary). They may even go as far as putting a whoopee cushion on another player's seat when they're in the bathroom.

They take clowning to the next level and this can be a major distraction for obvious reasons. Be careful of this one. And, just like dealing with the clown, it's a good idea to remind the mischief maker of the ground rules before each session.

**The Rules Lawyer** - ah, the classic archetype that's been around since 1974. Every gaming group has a rules lawyer, sometimes more than one, and often times it's everyone. In fact, depending on how long you've been playing with your group, it's likely most of them are rules lawyers or have been at one point in time. Rules lawyers come in all shapes and sizes and although there's a tendency to think that rules lawyering is bad, it can have its advantages.

Someone who's been rules lawyering for a long time has learned not to be so pedantic with their in-game objections. This means they'll approach errors with caution and only when the timing won't interrupt the game's natural flow, like during a break or even after the session has ended.

In Sly Flourish's the **Lazy Dungeon Master**, he suggests appointing someone as a rules lawyer. This is actually a great idea because it takes some pressure off of you as the DM and it gives the rules lawyer the authority to be themselves. With some simple and agreed upon guidelines before each session, this can make the game easier to manage and more enjoyable.

**The Pedant** - this is the player that will correct everyone, almost immediately, if an error is made during play. And, I mean, any error. The pedant will jump on you for mispronunciations of common words like:

- Portcullis
- Sconce
- Chasm
- Gibbering
- Dais

A pedant will also call you out if you stammer on the plural of **octopus**. Is it *octopuses*, or *octopi*?

We can all be a pedant at times, it's only natural. But, some pedants don't have an off switch and you should be aware of this. A pedant wants to be right and they want everyone to know it. Even, when they're wrong.

**The Problem Solver** - This player type loves (I mean LOVES) puzzles, traps, and tricks. These are the players who will eat the food on the dining room table in room #4 of Castle Amber (See TSR Dungeon Module X2: Castle Amber for more details).

Like explorers, they're curious and fascinated by the unknown. They may not be reckless, but their eyes will light up with anything that seems like it needs to be solved:

- A dungeon's floor that looks like a chess board? Yes!
- A statue with gems for eyes gems in different colors? Yes!
- A room with no doors but a small prism sitting on the floor in the center of the room? Oh, hell yes!

This is the domain of the problem solver. When puzzles appear, they'll roll up their sleeves and get to work. So, you better stand back - they have solving to do!

**The Fight Every-Thing** - these are the players who are responsible for most TPKs (Total Party Kills). If you're reading this and you can relate because you fall into this category, you know it's true. This player type will attack anything. A goblin? Definitely. A black dragon? Sure, why not?! A flower? Hmmm, could be dangerous.

The fight every-thinger can be a fun person to have in your group. But be careful, or you may find yourself in danger that you can't run from.

## Handling Players With Different Styles

These are only some of the player archetypes, and most players won't fall into any of these categories. But, other players may fall into one of more of them.

Based on these unknowns, you're probably wondering what you can do about players with mixed styles.

First, make sure you have ground rules for your sessions so that everyone understands and respects the possible diversity of the group. Diverse groups are more dynamic and have more fun, but it can be difficult to balance these personalities.

Also, keep in mind that players and their characters can be different and each may have different goals. What, this sounds crazy. What are you talking about?

Here's an example: let's say you have a player who's a typical fight every-thinger but they've decided to play a lawful good human paladin in your current campaign.

The player may want to smash everything they encounter, but their character wouldn't if they wanted to "stay in character." There's a balance here of course and this is why the player archetypes are just examples of some of the extremes.

The point I'm trying to make is that you may need to separate the players from their characters and understand that they may each have different motivations or goals. I mean, the players are there to have fun with their friends but their characters have goals in the game world. The two may not always align, so it's best to prepare for this.

If you're the type of DM who strictly uses alignment in your game then you can use this to your advantage when the paladin starts to act outside what's normal for a lawful good character.

Reminders are a great way to start, but if the player continues to act outside the norms of a lawful good character, a natural, in-game consequence can be helpful.

Perhaps the paladin's deity temporarily bestows a curse upon them?

Use your best judgment and always follow the golden rule: Have fun.

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