

Slav



dungeon adventure game

Slay

Explore dangerous dungeons, discover magical treasures and for the love of all things holy get out alive.

Requirements: Bunch of d6s (red and white), pencils, paper, good chums.

Create a character

You are a **dungeoneer**. Choose three **skills**: might, folklore, animal husbandry, stealth, magic knowledge, perception, appraisal, engineering, nature, oratory, entertaining, speed, nimbleness, navigation, languages.

Choose two **armaments** (weapons are either melee or ranged): light weapon, medium weapon, heavy weapon, armour, shield.

Choose two **descriptors**: valiant, cunning, esoteric, stoic, radiant, enigmatic, mirthful, serious, hot-blooded, smooth, driven, relaxed.

Select **spell spheres** (optional): illusion, manipulation, elemental, shadow, charm. For each sphere reduce your starting total Health by 2.

Your Health is 10 and your Defence is 5. Your wealth is 1.

Task rolls

Whenever you need to take a risk or do something interesting roll white

2d6. The result of 8+ is a **success**. If it's 7 it's a **partial success**, otherwise you fail. If you have a relevant skill roll 3d6 and total the two highest. An **easy** roll is 6+ (5 for partial) and a **tough** roll is 10+ (9 for partial). **Double six always hits and double one always misses.**

Battles

When fighting, time is split into **rounds** and **turns**. During a turn a character can move 30ft (6 squares) and take an action: move, attack, cast spell, manipulate object. After all combatants have had a turn a new round begins.

Initiative: Players go first unless they're surprised.

Attacking: If a character is adjacent to another they can make a melee attack. Roll a white 2d6 and a red d6 called an **effort die**. If the white total meets or exceeds the opponent's defence you've scored a hit and weapon damage is subtracted from their health. You may choose to add the result of the effort die to the total **or** turn it into a **dodge die**, keeping the result and adding it to your defence until the start of your next turn.

Ranged attacks work in the same way but can be done from up to 60ft (12sq) away. You can't shoot if you're adjacent to a foe and you can't shoot through enemies. If you made at least two ranged attacks roll a d6 at the end of combat. On a 1-2 you run out of ammo.

Changing weapons: Not an action, but anyone wanting to swap their weapon can only move half.

Death and Ghosts

When you reach 0 health you may become a ghost, retaining all your memories, spells and skills (but not your items). You may choose to possess a friendly NPC. If you do your health total is reduced by 1.

Weapons and armour

- **Light weapons** do 2 damage and you gain a +1 to dodge die (i.e. dagger, stiletto, sling).
- **Medium weapons** do 3 damage (i.e. shortsword, club, axe).
- **Heavy weapons** do 4 damage and -1 to dodge die (i.e. longsword, claymore, crossbow).
- Shields can't be used with two-handed or heavy weapons.
- Armour and shields each add 1 to defence.

Mundane items

You may access mundane items at any point by making a task roll and adding your wealth level. On a success you have that item. On a partial success you get a **brittle** item for one use. Don't overuse this and you can't try to get the same item you failed a roll on. Mundane items include rope, mirror, chalk, ink, torches etc.



Gold and wealth

All treasure has a gold value between 1-6. When you gain treasure of value above your wealth, your wealth increases by 1. Most dungeoneers aim for wealth 6.

1. **Destitute:** can barely afford food.
2. **Struggling:** can eat and sleep in the worst accommodation. Affords light weapons.
3. **Comfortable:** can eat well and stay in rudimentary rooms. Affords up to medium weapons and a shield.
4. **Wealthy:** can afford some servants and a plush home. Can afford any weapons or armour/shield.
5. **Aristocratic:** able to afford an estate with a sizeable staff, including guards.
6. **Monarch:** can afford a castle and royal guard. Nothing is off limits.

Casting spells

You can cast spells based on the spheres you can access. Spells never deal damage but can add conditions. When casting a spell you need a success. Describe the effect you want to the GM and they will give you a difficulty for the task roll. The GM decides the effect it has. On a partial success the spell has a lesser effect. Rolling double ones causes a backfire - the GM describes how the spell goes awry.

Advancement

After gaining the final treasure of a dungeon or defeating the boss you may advance. Increase health by 3 and gain a glory point. You have access to all your glory points at the start of each session and they don't roll over to next session. A glory point lets you reroll any white or red dice. If there's a good narrative reason for it, the GM may allow you to gain a new skill.

Dungeon points

At the start of each session the GM has a dungeon point for every player plus 2. They can spend one to reroll any of their own dice, activate a room effect, or roll a d6 on the **dungeon threat table** below:

1. A new enemy springs out of the shadows.
2. An enemy previously thought dead is alive with half their health.
3. A player springs a trap that deals 2 damage.
4. One enemy increases its def by 1.
5. An enemy regains half its total health.
6. An enemy becomes resistant to spells for the rest of the combat.

Darkness

Pretty much everywhere in a dungeon is dark so at least one dungeoneer will need a light source like a torch. They will always light up a room. Torches have 6 charges and burn out after using their last charge. While in darkness actions requiring sight are tough. Actions made to keep out of sight are easy.

Exploration

When a room contains no enemies it can be explored. One character making an **exploration action** can find one item/secret door automatically (if one exists). For each exploration action a lit torch loses a charge.

Enchanted Weapons

All enchanted weapons contain a demon, djinn, elemental, sorcerer or other sentient being. When you acquire one roll a d6. On a 1 the weapon dislikes you and you can't use its special ability. On a 2-3 it's neutral, so you can use its ability once per day. On a 4+ it likes you and you

can use its ability any time. If you discard it, the weapon hates you. Example enchantments include:

- **Thirsty:** For every enemy you slay, regain 2 health as the blood is absorbed into the weapon.
- **Floating:** You can fly up to 15ft in the air.
- **Horrifying:** When you deal damage to an enemy they roll a d6. On a 4+ they gain scared 1.
- **Deadly:** Do an additional 2 damage.
- **Dimensional:** Creates a tear in space that you may step into, emerging in a space up to 60ft away.
- **Explosive:** When you slay a foe their body explodes. Any other foe within 10ft takes 2 damage.

Healing

Once per session you can take a **breather**, replenishing half your health and losing a torch charge. Spending a **night's sleep** in a town replenishes all health.



Faction Rank

Every dungeon has 2-3 factions vying for supremacy. This creates tension and options for PC's. The GM gives each faction a rank, either 1, 2 or 3, with 3 having the most control over a dungeon. Factions will move up and down ranks based on player actions (i.e. aiding them, foiling their plans). A faction can never share a rank with another faction, instead they replace that rank and the other faction moves down one place. If faction 2 kobolds go up to 3 rank, the 3 rank skeletons drop to rank 2, ousted for supremacy. Ranks can only ascend or descend by one point at a time.

Room Effects

The GM can give dungeon rooms certain effects that are activated by spending a dungeon point. A room may have one or two effects.

- **Crumbling:** the ceiling begins caving in dealing 2 damage to d6 characters unless they succeed a nimble task roll.
- **Unholy:** necromantic energy flows through the room. One slain enemy returns with half health.
- **Breezy:** a gust of wind blows through the room. All torches lose two charges.
- **Warded:** a magic sigil prevents spells from being cast while in the room. The ward may be broken with three successes.
- **False hoard:** an illusory treasure hoard seems inviting, but an enemy lurks in wait.
- **Unsettling:** the PC's feel uneasy in this room. They can't take a breather in it.
- **Littered:** debris is strewn everywhere. Movement is halved in this room.
- **Foggy:** All task rolls needed to see are tough.

Conditions

Some dungeon hazards and weapons cause conditions. A condition always includes a number, which is the number of rounds it lasts for.

- **Malaise:** All task rolls are tough.
- **Invisible:** An invisible character is always assumed to have a dodge die of 6.
- **Silent:** You're unable to speak or cast spells.
- **Scared:** You can't attack or move towards the source of scared.
- **Ensnared:** You are controlled by the one who ensnared you. You can't come to direct harm.
- **Slowed:** You can move 10ft in total.
- **Vengeful:** When attacking the source of vengeful get a +2 to white dice.
- **Corrupted:** There's a 2 in 6 chance you will attack an ally on your turn.
- **Dazed:** You can only take a move action.
- **Paralysed:** You can't move or take actions.
- **Hasted:** You may take an additional action.
- **Staggered:** You can't use a dodge die.

APC Reactions

If the GM doesn't know how an NPC might react to the PC's, roll 2d6. If the NPC is part of a faction that the PC's have aided, +2 for the number of ranks they have increased.

- 2-4: Hostile
- 5-7: Unfriendly
- 8-10: Friendly
- 11-12: Helpful.

Populating Rooms

The GM may roll to randomly populate their rooms. First roll for the number of elements in a room.

- 1: No element
- 2-3: One element
- 4-5: Two elements
- 6: Three elements

Elements

- 1. Monster
- 2. Treasure
- 3. Trap
- 4. Weird NPC
- 5. Dungeon feature
- 6. Monster

Treasure

Treasure is generally handfuls of jewels, golden trinkets, lockboxes of coins. Generally the gold value corresponds to the dungeon level.

- 1. Gems
- 2. Art piece
- 3. Jewellery
- 4. Ceremonial weapon
- 5. Coin chest
- 6. Magic item

Traps

Traps should be telegraphed. Traps are a deterrent and are rarely hidden. A dungeoneer can either attempt to disarm or circumvent the trap with an associated skill. If they fail the trap is sprung and has an effect, generally damage and/or a condition.

- 1. **Pit:** disarm (impossible), circumvent (speed, easy). Damage 2, condition dazed 2.
- 2. **Swinging blade:** disarm

(engineering, normal), circumvent (speed/nimbleness, tough). Damage 4, condition staggered 2.

3. **Fireball:** disarm (magical knowledge, tough), circumvent (speed/nimbleness, normal). Damage 5.

4. **Crushing walls:** disarm (perception, normal), circumvent (might, tough). Damage: 10 per round, condition paralysed (until you're out).

5. **Gas:** disarm (engineering, easy), circumvent (speed, tough). Damage 2 per round, condition malaise (while in the gas).

6. **Poison dart:** disarm (engineering, normal), circumvent (nimbleness, normal), condition dazed 3.

Weird NPC

All manner of weird little guys hang around in dungeons. Usually they're neutral to friendly. Roll on both d6 tables.

- 1. Forgetful
- 2. Enthusiastic
- 3. Tormented
- 4. Lost
- 5. Feisty
- 6. Obsessive

- 1. Magician
- 2. Shopkeeper
- 3. Dungeoneer
- 4. Spirit
- 5. Academic
- 6. Tourist

Dungeon Features

Roll a d6.

- 1. Strange statues
- 2. Bookshelves
- 3. Stone altar
- 4. Murky pool
- 5. Beds
- 6. Mystic glyphs

Monsters

A monster is a general term of any foe. All non-human monsters can see in the dark.

Bandit

Cocky. Desperate. Foolhardy.

Def: 5, Health: 4. Light melee and medium ranged.

- 1 in 6 chance of wearing armour.

Bear

Powerful. Fast. Maternal.

Def: 6, Health: 6. Heavy melee.

- If within 20ft of its young the bear may reroll its effort die.

Bat, Giant

Ambusher. Nocturnal. Screeching.

Def: 6, Health: 6. Medium melee.

- Can move twice on its turn.

Chimera

Rampaging. Protective. Trapped.

Def: 7, Health: 12. Heavy melee.

- 3 in 6 chance anyone damaged is staggered. 1



Cultist

Mysterious. Occultist. Chanting.

Def: 5, Health: 7. Light melee and medium ranged.

- After dealing damage 1 in 6 change of giving the corrupted 1 condition.

Dragon

Gigantic. Flying. Terrifying

Def: 8, Health: 20. Heavy melee and heavy ranged.

- Can't be scared.
- 2 in 6 chance of making a flame attack dealing 6 damage.

Eldritch Horror

Should. Not. Be

Def: 6, Health: 16. Heavy melee.

- When anyone first sees an eldritch horror they are scared 2
- Normal weapons deal half damage to eldritch horrors.

Goblin Grunt

Sneaky. Careless. Hungry.

Def: 5, Health: 3. Light melee and light ranged.

- -1 Def in daylight
- +1 attack if within 10ft of another goblin grunt

Goblin Warrior

Boisterous. Proud. Greedy.

Def: 6, Health: 6. Medium melee and light ranged.

- -1 Def in daylight

Kobold

Helpful. Obsessive. Clumsy.

Def: 5, Health: 3. Light melee and light ranged.

- 1 in 6 chance of having poison arrows. Deals 2 damage and slowed 2.

Living Statue

Unfeeling. Precise. Ensnorcelled.

Def: 7, Health: 8. Medium melee

- Gets a +1 to dodge die
- Weapons deal half damage until statue is on 3 health.

Skeleton

Animated. Single-minded. Chattering

Def: 6, Health: 6. Medium melee

- Melee weapons deal +1 damage again skeletons
- Skeletons may attack twice if they're within 5ft of another skeleton.

Snake, Giant

Engulfing. Rattling. Hypnotic

Def: 7, Health: 12. Heavy melee

- After dealing damage 3 in 6 chance of paralyzing 1.
- Anyone who first sees the giant snake must make task roll (speed). Partial success they are corrupted 1. Failure they're corrupted 2.

Sorcerer

Mad. Talkative. Eccentric

Def: 6, Health: 8. Light melee and light ranged.

- As a ranged attack may cast writhing vines. On a success the target is slowed 3. On a partial success they are slowed 2.
- As an action may cast teleport. On a success they may appear up to 100ft away. On a partial success they may appear up to 30ft away.
- As an action may cast gust of wind. On a success all torches lose 2 charges. On a partial success all torches lose 1 charge.

Vampyre

Sexy. Thirsty. Nocturnal

Def: 7, Health: 10. Medium melee.

- Fire does 5 damage to vampyres
- After dealing damage, replenish 2 health
- Can fly up to 30ft

GM Guide

Being a GM is a lot of fun and anyone in the role shouldn't sweat it. Here are some guidelines to running games and creating adventures.

Non-Adversarial

A GM isn't out to 'get' the players. Together they're creating an emerging narrative. Be a fan of the characters and if you're stuck on making a judgement ask the players.

Rulings

Being a lite game Slay's rules don't cover every eventuality. A GM should make rulings where no rule exist. If unsure roll a d6. On a 4+ the answer is yes..

Interactivity

Your dungeon should include lots of things for dungeoneers to tinker with. Just a few weird objects that do odd things, or items they can use to create solutions to challenges.

Challenge Variety

Keep dungeon challenges varied. Not everything will be a lethal combat encounter. Include NPCs to win over, obstacles to overcome, blocked doors, magical areas with different effects. Use dungeon points to introduce new challenges.

Set Expectations

Slay is a game specifically about dungeon crawling. Some players coming from other traditional games may not be familiar with this, so lay out expectations in a session zero.

Adventure Objectives

Roll a d6 on each table to create a random adventure objective.

1. Slay
 2. Capture
 3. Rescue
 4. Escort
 5. Find
 6. Destroy
-
1. Magic item
 2. Monster
 3. Noble
 4. Sorcerer
 5. Undead
 6. Artefact

Dungeons

Roll a d6 on each table to create your dungeon.

1. Necrotic
 2. Flaming
 3. Frozen
 4. Ruined
 5. Eldritch
 6. Dread
-
1. Temple of the
 2. Tower of the
 3. Castle of the
 4. Caves of the
 5. Lair of the
 6. Tomb of the
-
1. Doom
 2. Beast
 3. Dragon
 4. Unholy
 5. Undead
 6. Demon
-
1. Princess/Prince
 2. Queen/ King
 3. Sorcerer
 4. God(dess)
 5. Priest
 6. Cult

Dungeon Factions

Roll a d6 to get a faction.

1. Cultists
2. Goblins
3. Undead
4. Bandits
5. Kobolds
6. Beasts

Example Adventure

Based on these random tables, my own adventure is to capture a monster in the Dread Lair of the Undead Cult. My two factions are undead and bandits. As a GM I decide that the monster the dungeoneers need to capture is a vampire called Count Lucius whose very blood may hold the key to curing a disease that's plaguing the countryside.

Start at the Dungeon

In Slay we cut the fat and get straight to the action, with each session starting at the dungeon entrance.

Campaigns

A campaign is a series of dungeons following the same characters and plot threads. You may decide to have an overarching narrative or just do a 'dungeon of the week' (both are fun). Campaigns allow dungeoneers to gain glory points and increase their health, which can be rewarding for players. Discuss with you players what sort of game you all want to play.

*Writing and layout by Scott Malthouse.
Art by public domain.*