

# How to Succeed in Tabletop Roleplaying Game Publishing

May 1, 2023



In September 2020, I left my 22-year career with no prospects. I picked up a temporary day job to pay the bills and provide health insurance, but in July 2021, I left that job to [focus on roleplaying game development full-time](#). I didn't have much to lose, since my day job wasn't paying enough to sustain my family, but it was still a risk – something is better than nothing. I stepped into uncharted territory with a plan to [launch a Kickstarter](#) to get the business off the ground, but as an Enneagram Type 3 personality, I'm terrified of failure, so I was plagued by the question, "Will I succeed?" And not only do I consider myself already successful, but I believe I've learned how to do that, and in an industry where every challenge seems to be mythic, where the monster, once slain, rises again stronger than ever, it might be helpful to share my insights, as my road has been unlike most in this field.

**Note: I'm presenting these observations and tips as a publisher, not a freelancer.** It's important that you decide which you want to be as you start out. If you start as a freelancer and don't start building an audience right away, you'll have some makeup work to do if you decide you want more control over your work. But publishing requires a lot of work that's not just creating.

# Choose Your Class

The three pillars of any RPGs are exploration, social, and combat. In TTRPG publishing, the tiers follow a similar pattern.

**Exploration.** Search yourself. What are your passions? What is your niche? What do you love creating? What mark do you want to leave on the hobby? What niche would you love to spend the next few years learning about, exploring, and working on?

**Social.** Find your audience. What niche is underserved? What are people requesting that isn't available? It could be a topic, a unique combination of topics, or a new product. Maybe people want jellyfish-themed subclasses or feather dusters that look like phoenixes or cockatrices.

**Combat.** Where's your proficiency? When you get to work, what are you good at? What do you have a knack for? Are you a wordsmith, an artist, a crafter, a speaker...what rolls do you have bonuses on?

Now find where all three of those overlap. You need the skill to make something valuable, or you won't get compensated for your work. You need an audience that wants what you're creating, even if they don't know it yet, but it's definitely easier if they know and are looking for it already. And you need passion, or it'll get boring fast, and you don't want to turn your hobby into a business only to get bored.



Photo by Evgenia Basyrova on [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

# Find Your Allies

Thanks to recent events, my belief about this industry has been solidly confirmed that, just as TTRPGs are cooperative games,

not competitive, the same is true of the TTRPG publishing industry. “A rising tide raises all ships.” Consequently, **the most effective form of marketing in the TTRPG industry is cross-promotion.**


So make friends. Find people who share your passions and your niche. But don’t stop there. Gamers often have eclectic tastes, so don’t limit your social circles. At the same time, by making friends whose lives and interests are different, you’ll expand your awareness, empathy, and creativity.

As you expand your social circle, start talking to your friends about cross-promotion. Or just promote their stuff without expectation of reciprocation. Just be a good friend. Over time, each of you will help each other, you’ll expose your audience to new products, and your audience will grow at the same time.



Photo by William Fortunato on [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

## Start Your Quest

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- **Learn the Craft.** Publishing a supplement is more detailed than creating an adventure or homebrew for your home game. Each game system requires certain standard syntax. Learn

those phrases. Get involved in an online community like [/r/UearthedArcana/](#). Take the Write Your First Encounter course from the [Storytelling Collective](#) – it's worth the cost.

- **Put some small free creations on [DriveThruRPG](#).** This is the easiest way to build an audience. If you start with free, people will try your work, and you'll be able to email about half of them with future announcements. If writing is your specialty, not layout, find a template for Word or use [GM Binder](#) or [Homebrewery](#) for design, and use public domain art.
- **Create some slightly larger projects, and charge for them.** (Don't make them Pay What You Want. There's no benefit to that.)
- Meanwhile, start thinking about a **Kickstarter**, a project big enough to make it worth the platform, but it doesn't need to be huge. A 30-page adventure, collection, or other supplement using stock art will get you started, and a low price tier for the digital format will encourage people to try your work with minimal risk. The goal of this project is less about income and more about number of backers. Use [DriveThruRPG](#) to fulfill at least the digital product, and they will allow you two emails to your customer list. And then when your backers get their finished product, they'll be added to your email list there. Meanwhile, when you send out surveys at the end of your project, offer the opportunity to join an external email list, like [Mailchimp's free email tier](#). (Note: Mailchimp recently drastically reduced their free tier subscriber limit. You can start there, but you'll need to move to something else quickly, so shop around.)
- By the time you finish your first Kickstarter, you'll have **three ways to contact your audience**: DriveThruRPG, Kickstarter backer updates, and your email list. Each has

a different focus, so be careful how you use each one, and respect each group.

- Repeat the process, **adding collaborators** to build larger products (or keep doing small ones if you want!), and you're well on your way.

## Keep Leveling Up

Part of the benefit of collaborating means learning. Use editors and sensitivity readers. They will help you learn how to make a better product. Hire extra writers, and learn from their styles. Get on [Discords](#) with other creators to improve your craft. Ask your peers to look at your works in progress, and invite feedback.

## Don't Forget Downtime

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rgPhoto by Madison Inouye on [Pexels.com](#)

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**Find another hobby.** I set goals to read a certain number of comic books via my Marvel Unlimited subscription each week. It allows me to relax and feed my creativity with a different

medium and genre than high fantasy TTRPG.

**Invest in your values.** Think about what's most important to you. For me, it's my Christian faith and my family. If I want both of those to grow stronger, I need to invest time in them. For me, that means blocking out time on my calendar for those priorities and sticking with them. Thankfully, my wife loves me dearly and won't let me neglect those values. If your time use doesn't reflect your values, consider asking someone to hold you accountable to your own goals. I use [RescueTime](#) to set productivity goals, but it also helps me limit my work.

**It's a Game. If it's not fun, you're doing it wrong.**

Tying back to the first point, TTRPGs are amazing, but publishing has major challenges. It won't always be fun, but check with yourself – when it's time to start your work, are you excited or dreading it? That can change depending on the day's plans, but how do you feel about it overall? If you start to dread it, you may want to consider a different field or at least a different approach. Maybe you need to hire people to take some of the drudgery from you. As I often tell my children, "Make choices that give you what you want."

**What I wish I knew before I started**

Finally, here's a few tips I learned along the way that might be helpful to someone:

- **VAT:** If you use DriveThruRPG for fulfillment, they handle VAT and other international details. If you don't live in the EU, it's almost impossible to ship physical products there due to VAT unless you work through a distributor.

Especially when you're just starting out, using their Print on Demand service is invaluable.

- **Proofread your updates:** You can edit updates for up to 30 minutes after you post them, but most backers read it in their email, so they won't see the typos you fixed. I sent out 2 updates with subject lines that said our pre-order store was open when it wasn't yet, because I thought it would be when I started the message, but then plans changed, and I forgot to edit the subject.
- **Figure out how you're going to handle pledge management in advance.** Contact the company you're planning to use. Get it set up and ready to launch as soon as possible, preferably shortly after you launch your campaign. Know how to import your backers into it. I tried importing my backers into Gamefound, and while adding people was easy, I gave up trying to import their pledges in a form that worked with our campaign.
- **Marketing isn't evil.** It's just letting people know about the cool stuff you're making so they don't miss it. Even though Limitless Heroics had 2300 backers, more people keep finding it. Our website continues to get significant traffic from Kickstarter, even though the campaign ended a year ago. The more we get the word out, the more people who want this will know it exists. Just be honest.
- **Twitter is lousy for marketing.** I can count on one hand the number of people in this industry who have built a publishing business using Twitter as their primary marketing platform, and they all spent thousands of hours there interacting, and even then, the number of paying customers to followers is minuscule. Twitter is useful for freelancers, because it's about building relationships, not topics, and the algorithm demotes offsite links. But no matter what social media platforms you use, email is still king and the most effective way to connect with

those interested in your work..

- **DriveThruRPG's 2 PoD options have significant pros and cons.** When I launched the Limitless Heroics Kickstarter, I had no idea how it would be received, whether anyone would want it, so I chose their voucher system that didn't include the print cost in the backer tier. It was the lowest risk, but it led to a lot of confusion. I still get frustrated backer comments and messages about it. If you're not sure about your project's popularity or plan to allow for a lot of backer-submitted content or stretch goals that could increase the page count, this insures that print costs don't outweigh backer tier amounts, but be prepared to answer a lot of questions after the campaign when it's time for fulfillment, and be very clear about how this works in advance, repeating it frequently. Also, the boilerplate messaging that OneBookShelf offers for this process is confusing. Here's my suggestion to reword it, but IANAL.

*This campaign offers a digital copy as the main reward. However, backers can also pay extra after the campaign to get a discounted physical printed version of the book or cards through OneBookShelf's Print-On-Demand (POD) service. The POD version will become available to order after the digital version has been completed. Backers will receive a link to purchase the discounted POD version from OneBookShelf.*

So, what's your TTRPG publishing journey like? Share your thoughts in the comments below!

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# What the New Barbie With Down Syndrome Can Teach Us About Inclusivity in TTRPGs

May 1, 2023



## The new Barbie with Down syndrome and her impact

Mattel, the toy company behind Barbie, recently announced a [new doll in their Barbie line with Down syndrome](#), added to a line that includes [dolls with wheelchairs](#) and [one with a hearing aid](#).

As we see this gradual shift in representation in toys, we normalize disabilities in the lives of children. That way, we transform a “plastic” toy into a subtle tool to normalize people with disabilities in their lives, preventing othering and expanding their awareness and acceptance.

This new doll allows children with Down syndrome to play with toys that look like them and represent their experience, just as toys have added more racial and cultural representation in recent decades.


But this toy is for other kids, too, so the fantasy worlds they create in their pretend play includes disabled people as much as



any others. And the more we get accurate and respectful portrayals in multiple forms of media, the more understanding, empathy, and acceptance will be mirrored in children's play and their subsequent real-world interactions and relationships.

I've seen this impact in my own children. Because my work and passion lead to many conversations at home about disabilities and inclusion, and they love the service animals in [Limitless Heroics](#), when we met a student at their school with a service dog, they reacted as they would to someone's cool new backpack—they thought it was cool but not strange. When they encounter people in their lives with disabilities, they notice the differences and are sensitive to them, but they don't think of them as "those people." They are "my friends."

## What can we learn from Barbie about inclusivity in TTRPGs?

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- How can featuring characters with disabilities, such as Down syndrome, in a respectful and dignified manner enhance inclusivity in TTRPGs?
- What steps can game developers take to accurately reflect people with disabilities in stories and characters in TTRPGs?
- How can TTRPG players create diverse and inclusive gaming environments that accommodate everyone, including those with disabilities?
- How can we better listen to and consider feedback from players with disabilities in order to ensure inclusivity in all aspects of the game?

By learning from Barbie and paying attention to the importance of including diverse and accurate representations of disabilities, we can help create and foster more inclusive and respectful TTRPG communities.

### 3. ~~Steps~~ Ramps to Improvements in Representation in TTRPGs

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- Creating characters with disabilities that are complex and multi-dimensional.
- Making sure characters' disabilities do not define them and limit them in any negative way.
- Ongoing conversations with willing players who have disabilities to help shape that representation in game rules and worldbuilding.
- Consider what accessibility looks like in your game world.
- Making sure players with disabilities have the resources and support they need, both physical and social.
- Considering how any special features, skills, equipment, or backstory related to a character's disability impacts both the game and the players.
- Use [artwork](#), props, and [miniatures with disability representation](#).

## What does a better future look like?

"You're playing D&D? Who's winning?" Has anyone ever asked you that? TTRPGs are uniquely cooperative. Properly played, everyone wins, because the success is more than loot or levels—it's a welcoming environment and enjoyment for everyone. So imagine

this box text describing the real world:

*As you enter the room, you see a diverse group of adventurers gathered around a table, each with their own unique character sheets. One player, with a character that has a physical disability, shares their backstory with the group. The other players listen attentively and ask questions to better understand the character's experience.*

*As they start to create their characters, the players encourage each other to consider incorporating diverse backgrounds and experiences. They work together to ensure that each character is balanced and equal in strength and credibility, regardless of any disabilities they may have.*

*As the quest unfolds, the players encounter a wide variety of NPCs, and some have disabilities as part of their larger descriptions and interactions.*

*Throughout their game, the players celebrate each other's successes and work together to create solutions that benefit everyone. They make sure that all players, including those with disabilities, feel included and supported both in and out of the game.*

*As you watch, you realize that this group of adventurers has truly embraced the importance of inclusivity and diversity in TTRPGs. They have created a safe and welcoming environment where everyone can enjoy their adventures together.*

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# A More Inclusive Community: Donate to our Community Copies Program

May 1, 2023



At Wyrmsworks Publishing, we believe that everyone deserves to be represented in the games they play. That's why we created [Limitless Heroics](#), a comprehensive disability compendium for tabletop roleplaying games. We're proud of the work we've done, but we know that not everyone can afford to buy a copy of the book.

That's where our Community Copies program comes in. For every copy someone donates, we match the donation and make two copies available for free. It's a way for us to give back to the community and make sure that everyone who wants to use Limitless Heroics can do so, regardless of their financial situation. And as we publish more books, we will add them to this program.

When you donate a Community Copy, you're not just helping someone else get access to the book. You're also showing your support for disability representation in tabletop gaming. You're helping us spread the word about this important resource and making sure that people with disabilities are included in the games we play.

# More Donations via Patreon

We also have a [Patreon program](#), and at the beginning of each month, we donate additional copies of Limitless Heroics based on the number and tiers of our patrons.

If you're in a position to help, we encourage you to consider making a donation to our Community Copies program. By doing so, you'll be helping us ensure that everyone has access to our resources, regardless of their financial situation.

To donate, simply click on the "Purchase Community Copies" button. You can then choose the number of copies you'd like to donate, and complete your purchase. We'll take care of the rest, ensuring that your donation goes directly to providing free copies of our products to those who need them.

Thank you for your support. Together, we can build a more inclusive and welcoming community for all tabletop role-playing game enthusiasts.

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# The Cost of a D&D Wheelchair

May 1, 2023



By its use as a universal symbol of disability in the real world

and its use throughout literature as the definitive representation of disability, it's no wonder that, when people think of disability representation in TTRPG, wheelchairs roll into our minds immediately, so today (March 1) being [International Wheelchair Day](#), let's examine the role of wheelchairs in tabletop roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons.

Wheelchairs first appeared in Wizards of the Coast products with Banak Brawnnavil in the 2010 novel, [Gauntlgrym](#) and in fifth edition sources in [Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft](#) (2021) with Alanik Ray, though none have yet included usage rules, but the most well known is Sarah Thompson's [Combat Wheelchair](#) (2020). Meanwhile, Pathfinder 2e's [Pathfinder Lost Omens: The Grand Bazaar](#) (2021) includes [wheelchair options](#), and more creators continue to add them to their supplements such as [this current 5e Kickstarter](#). And of course, we've included several options in [Limitless Heroics](#), listed below.

But what does a wheelchair cost in-game, both in gold and other expenses?

## What is its purpose?

Some wish to include wheelchairs to make their game worlds more interesting or to give a real world minority representation in the game world. Following the lead of [Tasha's Cauldron of Everything](#), which added prosthetic limbs as a magic item that perfectly replicates a missing limb without requiring attunement, a wheelchair, magic or not, may be gifted to players with only narrative mechanics. Pathfinder 2e likewise offers a basic wheelchair free as part of a character's backstory or 5 sp or 5 gp, depending on the model, plus upgrades.

The Combat Wheelchair offers its most basic model for 20 gp with

multiple upgrade options and associated costs and no mechanical penalties associated with the corresponding disabilities.

The cost, both in gold and other associated effects such as attunement or mechanics may be higher in your game. While understandable to want to give easy access to players, some groups may want to reflect the real world challenge of acquiring proper mobility aids, both in equipment and maintenance costs. You may want to reflect the difficulty of acquiring an expensive specialized device in a world with little or no medical insurance (which is the real world for many). The standard [wheelchair in Limitless Heroics](#) is 50 gp.

Do you require attunement slots for magic wheelchairs? How well can they navigate difficult terrain? Do they have limited levitation to more easily navigate obstacles like stairs? Do they follow the cost guidelines in chapter two of [Xanathar's Guide to Everything](#), or do assistive items get a discount?

Ultimately, these decisions depend on the nature of your game, but even more, the desires of your group. While many dismiss any kind of disability or assistive representation in the name of verisimilitude (even though wheelchairs predate rapiers in the real world), **it's just as easy to explain why the wheelchair is there as why not.**

But remember: **you don't owe the game anything.** TTRPGs are all about the players. If including wheelchairs in your game, either PC's, NPC's, or other creatures (like the [Goblin Wheelchair Cavalry](#)!) communicates a more welcoming, "We're open to all," environment to your players, include them. If your players struggle to get the assistive care they need and want to forget about red tape for a few hours, let the local temple or artificer give them out for free. Maybe some gnomes like making them with minor added features that aren't always reliable. Or



maybe you want to represent the challenges of acquiring accessibility in the real world and explore ways in the game world that will spark ideas for the real world.

## Magic Mobility

In your game world, the type of wheelchairs, especially magic wheelchairs, can vary according to the level of magic and technology.

In a magical steampunk world like Eberron, it may be powered by a bound elemental or clockwork. A dark fantasy world may have chairs made from arcane metals and spikes; in other worlds, a fiendish chair resembling a torture rack or a fey chair of braided crystal or wrapped in vines. And again, the costs would be dictated first by their role among your players and second by your world's economy.

- [Animated Wheelchair](#)
- [Rohna Ginnsley](#)
- [Wheelchair Cavalry Goblin](#)
- [Yeroc's Summoning Spiderwalk](#)
- [Webber's Water Wheels](#)
- [Waterlow's Instant Chariot](#)
- [Veralynn's Countryside Conveyance](#)
- [Tockelberry's Chair of Speed](#)
- [Rohna's Manipulative Mobility](#)
- [Howard's Handy Howdah](#)
- [Donna Nason's Wheelchair Ram](#)
- [Chaos's Orca Chair](#)
- [Anjol Hillfollower's Recumbent Carpet of Flying](#)
- [Aaron's Axles of Agility](#)

# The Final Cost

Ultimately, the cost of wheelchairs comes not in their expense, but in their value, partly to in-game characters, but mostly to your players.

However you incorporate them, you communicate the value of disabled people. It communicates acceptance instead of begrudging toleration. It makes your game accessible. It invites more people into the hobby.

It makes the real world a little more fantastic.

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## Gaining Advantage 025: Outrage Fatigue: Taking a Short Rest

May 1, 2023



This week, we welcome Simone Arnold, owner of Hero's Journey Counseling in Vermont, who discusses outrage fatigue, which can lead to burnout and empathy fatigue, how to balance the desire to make the world better with our own limitations, and prioritize rest.

0:00 Introduction

8:59 Interview: Simone Arnold, owner of Hero's Journey Counseling

31:15 Wrap-up

Manually captioned. Transcript available at our website.

## Simone Arnold Links

- Website: <https://www.herosjourneycounseling.net>
- Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@herosjourneycounseling7933>
- TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@simonearnoldmc>
- Twitch: <https://twitch.tv/dessicanuvell>

## Wyrmmworks Publishing

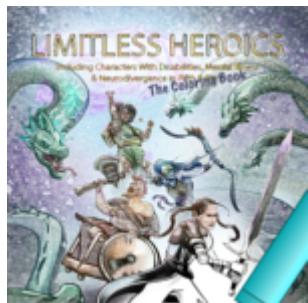
- Limitless Heroics: [http://wyrmmworkspublishing.com/product/limitless-heroics/?utm\\_source=youtube](http://wyrmmworkspublishing.com/product/limitless-heroics/?utm_source=youtube)
- The Lair: <https://cutt.ly/LairYT>
- Inclusive Artwork: Fantasy Stock Art with Disability Representation for TTRPGs: [https://crowdfundr.com/inclusiveartwork/?utm\\_source=youtube](https://crowdfundr.com/inclusiveartwork/?utm_source=youtube)

Wyrmmworks Publishing: <http://wyrmmworkspublishing.com>

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# Disabled D&D5e Heroes Coloring Book

May 1, 2023



Tabletop Roleplaying Games like Dungeons & Dragons are great equalizers: people of all ages and abilities can play together, cooperatively. What else can do that? Coloring books! So we used the amazing art from Limitless Heroics to create a coloring book for all ages!

48 images include fantasy characters, assistive devices, and service animals.

How does a coloring book make lives better?

- People like me with ADHD may benefit from coloring to help keep focused during games and other times, and D&D-related coloring books are rare.
- Put this in a child's hands, and you instantly normalize disabled heroes in their lives.
- D&D is for everyone, and so is artistic expression!
- The pages include quotes from disabled, neurodiverse, and mentally & chronically ill people to teach about their experiences and accessibility.
- ☞Service Owlbears☞ are adorable.

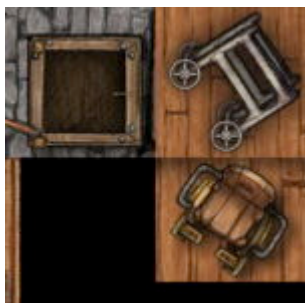
The book also includes a local site license for copying, so

schools, clinics, local game groups, and FLGSs can print or copy coloring pages for their local events, clients, and fellow players.

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# How to add disability inclusion into Inkarnate maps

May 1, 2023



Inclusive Design makes everything better. Adding disability inclusion to your maps not only makes them more accessible to all players, but it also adds realism and depth to the world you're creating.

## Ramp

If you're including ramps in your buildings ([Why?](#)), the **Long Table** asset makes it easy. Add a **Trap Door** to the top at 50% transparency, and you get the effect of coming up through a hole in the floor.



# Elevator

An elevator may seem anachronistic, but they've existed in various forms for 2200 years! An enlarged **Empty Crate** with a **Door** gives you an instant enclosed elevator, and you can add a **Lever** to serve as a manual crank on a block and tackle system, or make it magical with a **Magic Orb**!



# Wheelchair

Use the **Steampunk Tool** for wheels and a **Chair**. You can make the wheel assembly brown/tan to make it look like wood if you want.



# Rollator

Use the **Small Metal Ladder** (Transform: Adjust the width to get the right proportions) and **Metal Valve Wheel**. Connect the two ladders with **Handrails** or any wall piece stretched to the right proportion, and adjust the saturation and contrast to match the metal color. Or skip the connecting piece by overlapping that section. I put a connecting piece in the example image here, but it got covered up when I adjusted the scale.



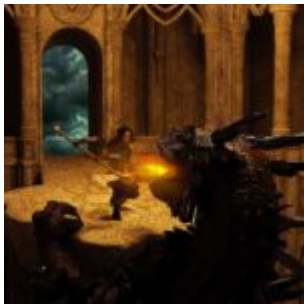
What devices would you like to see represented? Have you created

accessibility devices for your maps? Leave a comment!

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# Access the Dragon's Lair

May 1, 2023



How would you like access to **all of our publications**, modular and interconnected, **for only \$5/month**?

Yes, you're reading that right – all of our content, plus exclusives, all linked together for accessibility and ease of use, **all for 16¢/day!**

The Dragon's Lair is a wiki-like modular interface for our 5e content that gives you instant access to our content with embedded links to other sections to eliminate the need to scroll through a PDF to find the right entry. We want to make our content as affordable, accessible, and functional for everyone as possible, so we designed the Lair for this purpose.

For only \$5/month, you get access to the Lair without needing to buy the individual books, plus copies of **all of our Foundry VTT modules!** For \$15/month, you also get access to **full electronic copies of all of our published books** as we release them.

At higher tiers, we have

Plus you get access to our company Discord to chat with our team and more!

[Visit the Lair for all the details!](#)

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# Castle Curb Cuts: 10 reasons why ramps in D&D dungeons make sense

May 1, 2023



When Jennifer Kretchmer presented the *scandalous* idea of ramps in dungeons in [Candlekeep Mysteries](#), a significant portion of the D&D community couldn't wrap their mental dice bags around such a concept. It seemed incomprehensible to make dungeons more accessible, and I still get *multiple daily* angry or derisive comments to that effect whenever I run Facebook ads promoting our products.

But just as curb cuts, those little ramps in sidewalk curbs, were designed for wheelchairs but benefit strollers, shopping carts, bicyclists, and anyone else who uses wheels, including them in dungeons may be more sensible than stairs, regardless



what adventurers may come investigating.

So since I get tired of writing the same responses repeatedly, as do others who fight for accessibility and disability representation, consider these concepts, and feel free to comment below.

## **1. Are dungeons supposed to be inaccessible?**

*Dungeons are designed to keep people out!*

Are they, though? That depends on the dungeon. It's a generic term that can refer to any number of structures for any number of purposes. Often, a dungeon is a space that has either intentionally or naturally changed purpose over time. Maybe it was once a castle basement used for storage or as a siege shelter. Or a crypt. Or a cave. Or a menagerie. Or a majestic castle. Or a forest in the Feywild. When considering the accessibility of a dungeon (or any other details in its design), the designer must consider its purpose, its owner, its age, its ecology, and many other factors. But while the 10'×10' stone corridor underground is still a staple, it hardly represents the majority of adventuring environments in D&D.

## **2. Are dungeons all made from flagstone?**

Flagstone, made typically from sandstone or similar materials, is the classic material design for a dungeon, but a dungeon can be packed dirt, a tunnel carved out of a mountain, the alleys in the darker sections of Waterdeep, massive caverns in the Underdark, the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire, a

rickety old wooden mansion, or the rubble of ancient ruins. Each of these presents accessibility challenges to different characters – my tiefling warlock with chronic leg pain will manage a whole lot better than an able-bodied elf druid in the City of Brass, and if the steps in the haunted mansion suddenly become a slide, the walking character will be prone while the wheelchair user holds out a spear and yells, “Charge!”

### **3. What was the dungeon before it was haunted ruins?**

How many people are specifically building dungeons, anyway? They’re difficult to make and not particularly practical. Most dungeons used to be something else (or still are). The dragon isn’t going to build human-sized steps into its lair. A xorn digging through the Elemental Plane of Earth will create smooth tunnels. Water eroding an ancient cavern won’t erode at jagged 90° angles. An ancient dwarven mine would never have stairs (and may even have cart tracks or elevators). And the [inside of a crashed spaceship](#) will have smooth hallways and elevators. That doesn’t preclude the possibility of steps, a stone cliff (which is difficult for anyone but the rogue or monk to climb), or other obstacles, but if you can creatively find a way to cross that pit filled with a gelatinous cube, you can bet that a seasoned adventurer has some tricks up their sleeve to overcome occasional rough terrain.

### **4. Have you ever tried carrying an occupied coffin down stairs?**

Many dungeons were or are still crypts designed either for a wealthy family or to keep an ancient evil contained. If the current occupant came into that crypt in a pine box, you can bet

there's a ramp. I've attended and conducted dozens of funerals, and there's a reason modern morticians use carts for coffins – they're heavy, especially with a body in them! (And the bigger the corpse, the heavier.) So if you're carrying that coffin to its (hopefully) final resting place, guiding a cart into an underground crypt on a ramp with a rope will save you a whole lot of effort, even if there's also steps beside the ramp, either permanently or in the form of nearby removable timbers. A party coming to investigate a restless spirit would likely find the accommodations designed by the architect or implemented by a past undertaker.

## **5. What size creature were your stairs designed for?**

Stairs are designed for the people using them, so modern stairs are designed for a human range of heights and foot sizes. But if a dungeon occupied by both a clutch of kobolds and a family of ogres will either require the kobolds to bring climbing gear to scale ogre-sized steps or the ogres to walk sideways up the steps, even then with a lot of foot pain. A ramp easily solves this problem, not to mention making it easier to drag in fresh meat from a successful hunt or drag out bags of bones of unsuccessful adventurers.

## **6. How do you feed your monsters?**

Speaking of dragging carcasses, you need to feed that hydra that's somehow in a chamber with only 10'×10' corridor access and dispose of its waste. While I recommend an underground river or other sewage drain for the latter (which can be its own security problem when kobolds find it), unless you have a city's worth of *really gullible* bullywugs that are willing to go

investigate the noises that you insist are coming from a carnival with [dragonfly ripple ice cream](#), you're going to need to kill something and transport it into those snapping jaws, and you'll have a much easier time pushing it over a ramp than stairs.

## **7. How did all those stones, trap mechanisms, and monsters get down there?**

You know that big treasure chest full of gold and jewels? Yeah, it's probably a mimic. But if it's not, good luck lugging that thing down steps into the deepest chamber. Add tons of flagstone, support timbers, cages filled with monsters, chests of potions bottles, or whatever else you're storing down there. Put those containers on wheels down a ramp, and your building process will be a lot easier.

## **8. Which lasts longer in treacherous environments, stairs or ramps?**

As noted above, flagstone is usually made from sandstone. Sandstone erodes. That's how sedimentary rock forms. If that ancient staircase is as ancient as you describe, it's probably a ramp by now, albeit irregular, which would be even easier to navigate if it has some landings.

## **9. Dwarves had specific skills to detect ramps as early as 1st Edition.**

In AD&D, dwarves could, "Detect grade or slope in passage: 1-5 on 1d6." In other words, ramps in underground passages aren't

some new 5e concept – they're *oldschool*. Some were gradual, thus the check, and some were more obvious, but they had this skill in the first place because when you're digging a mine or underground city and need to move a lot of rock and goods around, slopes make a lot more sense than steps. And elevators, even better. And purple worms don't burrow in straight lines.

## 10. It's fantasy but makes the real world better.

All this fantasy talk is fun, but real lives are the most important factor. Discussions of “realistic” in a world where a spoken word can transform steps into a ramp or a mudslide or a mimic or a dimensional gateway, what matters most is the effect on our players. Even if a disabled player doesn't want to play a disabled character, including disabled NPCs and the effects of their existence in your world tells your players, “I don't want to imagine a world without you in it.”

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## Attention Deficit (ADHD) for D&D 5e

May 1, 2023



How can you represent Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in 5e that reflects real world experiences? Here's a free sample from Limitless Heroics to implement them in your game.

### **Content Warning: [Cyberbullying](#)**

Last year, I posted an early draft version of this preview to promote Limitless Heroics as I prepared for the Kickstarter campaign. In December, it, and consequently I, became the target of a Twitter [hater cyberbullying](#) attack by hundreds of people throughout the TTRPG community.

As a result of that, I pulled it down and wanted to hide. I seriously considered canceling the campaign altogether and closing up shop completely, but too many people were counting on me, and I was encouraged by some well-respected people in the industry to carry on, so with much trepidation, I continued with the campaign, avoiding Twitter and literally getting nauseated every time my phone made the new email chime for fear of the subsequent hate that flowed from that attack, and it has taken me this long to work up the courage to make this revised sample live again, reminding myself that, as big as the Twitter mob was, I've received nearly as many heartfelt notes of thanks and support, and *ten times as many* have already backed or preordered it. And with help from a licensed counselor, I'm learning to manage the subsequent anxiety and depression I've developed.

Ironically, I was recently diagnosed with ADHD myself, so I post this revision with confidence as it also reflects my own lived experience and that of *many* more who also have given input and affirm this as a reflection of their own experiences, plus it has been discussed and revised based on feedback from five sensitivity readers from multiple fields.

Because ADHD is a complex condition with a variety of expressions, we broke it into at least 3 separate traits with

options for more, depending on your experience, but here are the three most common associated traits. (I personally have several more.)

You can use this sample by itself for free or [purchase a copy of Limitless Heroics](#) for a more comprehensive guide to disability, neurodiversity, and mental illness representation in fifth edition. Thanks for your interest in making the D&D and broader TTRPG space more inclusive and representative. (If you use it alone, IE = Impact Extent. [See the tables for an explanation.](#))

**LAYOUT NOTE:** The format of this preview does not reflect the final format of Limitless Heroics, which we designed for maximum accessibility, including dyslexia-friendly.



[Download the Preview at DriveThruRPG](#)

No posts found.