



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

How you can get into

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

NADERA NAEEMA OHI

If you're a video game nerd, *Lord of the Rings* enthusiast, or even just a casual lover of entertaining fiction, you've probably wondered: what if I could be the protagonist of my own favourite story?

Your answer lies in the wonderful realm of *Dungeons & Dragons* (*D&D*)

The most popular tabletop-roleplaying game in the world does not, in fact, even require a tabletop. All you need to play *D&D* is the power of your own imagination, and a group of friends.

For a step-by-step guide to the game, read on, intrepid adventurer!

Step 0: So... what exactly is *D&D*?

In *D&D*, one player, called the Dungeon Master (DM), creates and narrates the setting of an imaginary world. The others each play their own character who can make their own choices to affect the story and events of that world. The dice are rolled and rules used to decide the successes and failures of those choices.

In *D&D*, anything is possible – you just have to imagine it.

Step 1: Okay, sounds cool! What do I need to play?

You don't actually need to buy anything at all to play *D&D*. The Starter Set Rules are free on the internet and online dice rollers are also free. YouTube is a great resource for complete beginners to get easy and quick visual tutorials of

the rules. If you plan to be the DM, it's particularly important for you to know the rules so you can help your players learn.

You might need to wrestle some of your best friends into playing with you. Even if you're painfully introverted, it's alright. *D&D* can be played even with just a minimum of three people – one DM, two players. You can also ask acquaintances who seem interested in gaming, fantasy novels, or similar interests.

Step 2: Got it. Tell me how to get started!

Since you're reading this article, and presumably have a strong interest in the idea of *D&D*, you are a great candidate to DM the first ever game with your friends. For that, you will need to check out the basic rules on YouTube.

Once you've done that, schedule a good time to play with your friends – a weekend evening might be a good bet. To note, one session or game of *D&D* is usually around two hours long.

Next, decide how much effort you want to put in. Some people research everything about *D&D* with detailed worldbuilding and notes before starting a game. Others just get together with their friends, make stuff up on the spot, and have fun. You and your players can decide what you prefer.

Step 2.5: I failed to blackmail my friends! How do I enjoy *D&D* now?

Although it might be difficult to form a group, there's a wealth of other ways to immerse yourself in *D&D*'s world.

Within video games, the *D&D*-based *Baldur's Gate 3* won Game of the Year. There are also tons of free actual-play shows and podcasts available on YouTube, such as *Critical Role* and *The Adventure Zone*. Finally, the officially released *Wizards of the Coast* books are great resources to learn more about the different settings you can run or take inspiration from.

Step 3: Any advice?

My biggest piece of advice: if possible, don't play *D&D* online. Traditionally, it's played with friends all sitting together at a table. However, it's also a great bonding game to bring together friends beyond the boundaries of distance, so you can definitely go for it over Zoom and using free platforms like *D&D Beyond*.

For players: "role-playing" isn't a job you have to do. It's simply your chance to imagine yourself as a heroic, interesting, and fun character, so let yourself enjoy the journey!

Finally, if you are the DM, don't take things too hard. You are allowed to have fun, be creative, and make mistakes. So don't worry about knowing every little rule or planning out every little detail of your world.

D&D is all about learning to love the sense of wonder in our childlike joy. So go ahead and allow yourself the freedom to relax, cherish your excitement, and play!

Nadera Naeema Ohi is an A level student at Maple Leaf International School.