DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ & EDUCATION

Wisconsin Adventures: Learning Through Role-Playing Games

WHO AM I?

Still married 36 years later!
#nerdsinlove
#adventurers

COURTESY OF LYNN LAAKSO
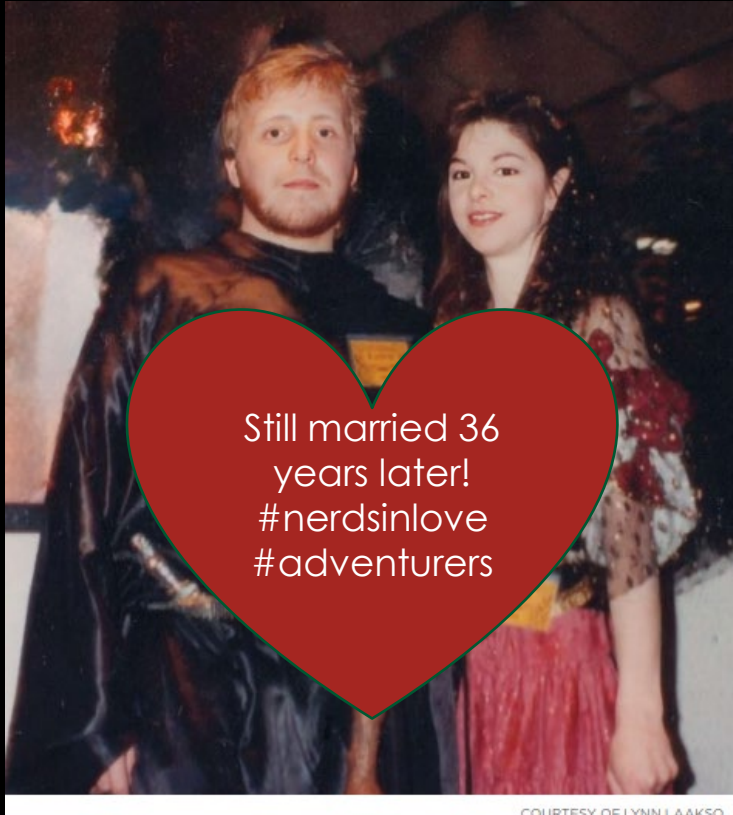
Gen X
Dad
Writer
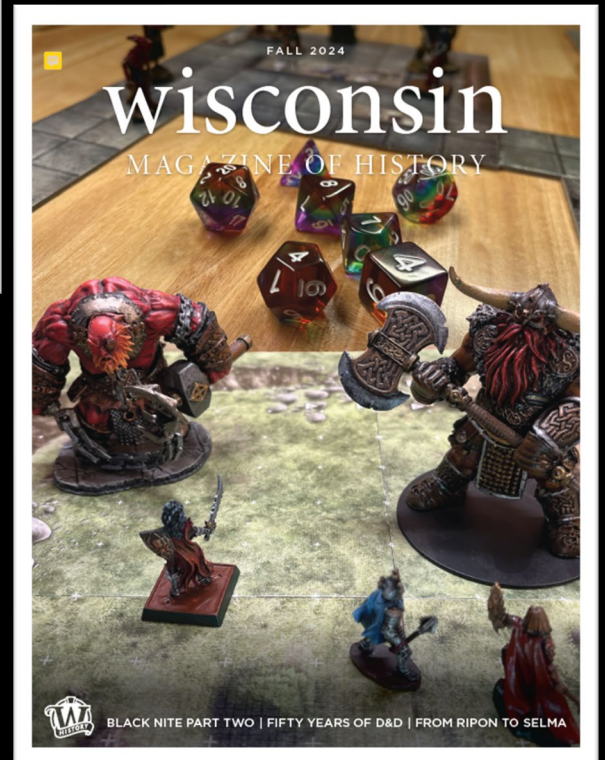Teacher
Producer
Veteran
Musician
Reader
Gamer

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

- A role-playing game is a game in which players assume the roles of characters in a fictional setting. Players take responsibility for acting out these roles within a narrative, either through literal acting or through a process of structured decision-making regarding character development. - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_game

WISCONSIN CONNECTIONS

- Dungeons and Dragons released in 1974 by TSR in Lake Geneva, WI

- Created by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson

- Combined elements of tabletop wargaming and fantasy tropes

- Inspired by Lovecraft, Arthurian legends, Tolkien, and more

FALL 2024

wisconsin
MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

BLACK NITE PART TWO | FIFTY YEARS OF D&D | FROM RIPON TO SELMA

Gary Gygax, Lake Geneva, WI

- Meets Dave Arneson in 1969 at GenCon II
- Created Chainmail (1971)
- Credited with being the first person to incorporate fantasy rules into wargaming
- "Don't Give Up the Ship" with Mike Carr and Dave Arneson (1972)
- Releases D&D with Dave Arneson (1974)
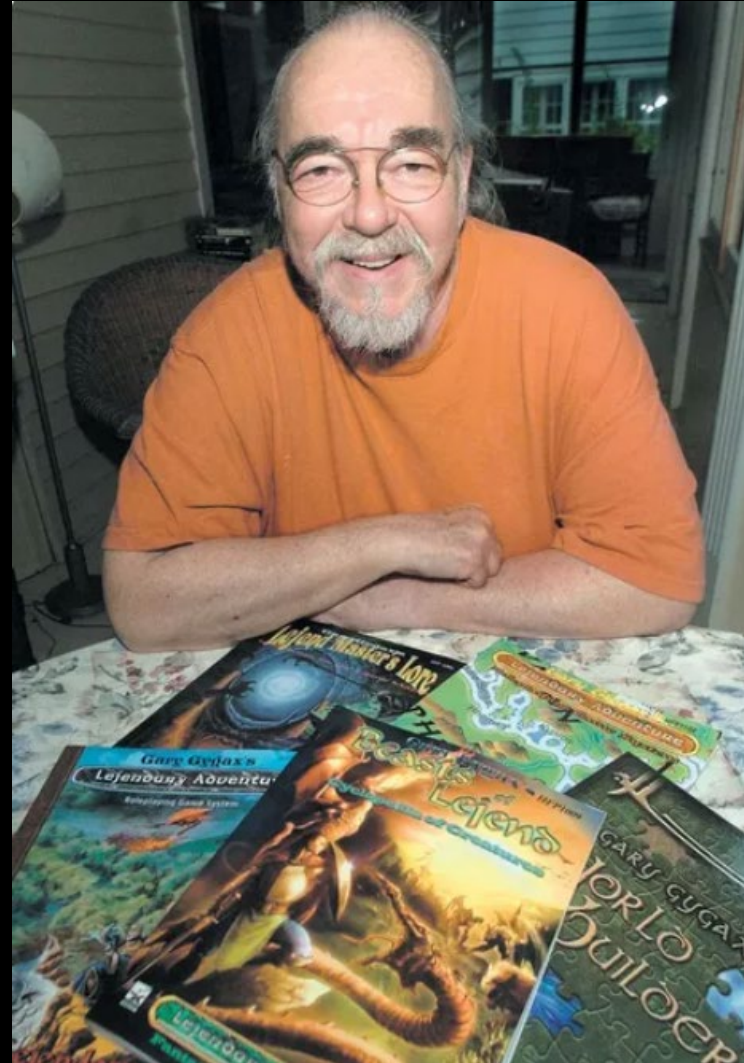- Releases AD&D (1977) and removes Dave Arneson from credits

Photo credit: https://boardgamegeek.com/image/721172/gary-gygax

Dave Arneson – St. Paul, MN

- Meets Gary Gygax in 1969 at GenCon II
- Created Blackmoor (~1972)
- Credited with being the first Dungeon Master
- "Don't Give Up the Ship" with Mike Carr and Gary Gygax (1972)
- Written out of the credits for AD&D (1977)
- Sues for partial rights and wins 1982
- Name remains on Basic set thereafter

Photo credit: https://www.ultanya.com/2015/10/remembering-dave-arneson.html

TACTICAL STUDIES RULES

1973

Gary Gygax and Don Kaye found Tactical Studies Rules (TSR) in Lake Geneva, WI.

1974

TSR publishes the first edition of *Dungeons and Dragons*.

1995

Advanced Dungeons and Dragons 2nd Edition is the last edition of D&D published by TSR.
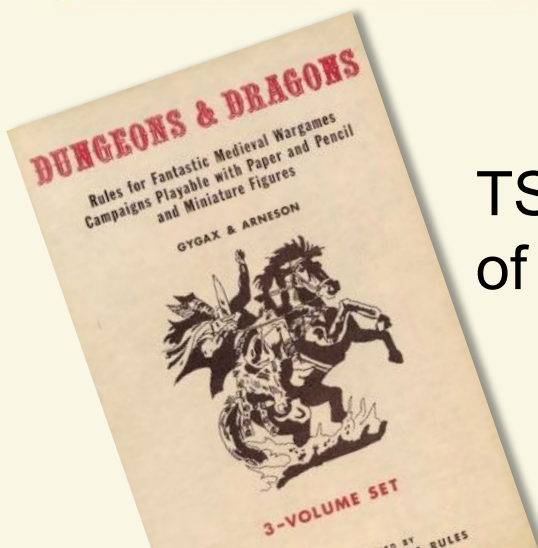
1997

TSR is acquired by the Seattle game company, Wizards of the Coast.

CULTURAL IMPACT

MEDIA

D&D's impact ranges beyond the tabletop, with a variety of games, movies, and books created to entertain fans.

SATANIC PANIC

Due to its use of spells and monsters, D&D became a focal point for the Satanic Panic in the 1980s.

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS:
Just harmless fun—or sorcery?

By GUS THOMSON
Staff Writer

A POPULAR PASTIME

Who plays Dungeons and Dragons? According to a Harbour Park Toys and Wheels toy store spokesman, everyone from seven-year-old children to doctors and lawyers come in for the game or some of paraphernalia that can add to the reality of the fantasy.

The basic game retails for $18.95 at most stores and an advanced version, described by one player as containing less "hacking and slashing," also sells for $18.95.

Paraphernalia includes half-inch tall paintable lead figures, dice, pencils, score sheet, and guidebooks. If you

THE EVOLVING TABLE TOP

3D PRINTING

Miniatures have been part of the game since its early days. Today 3D printing gives players new ways to engage with the tabletop.
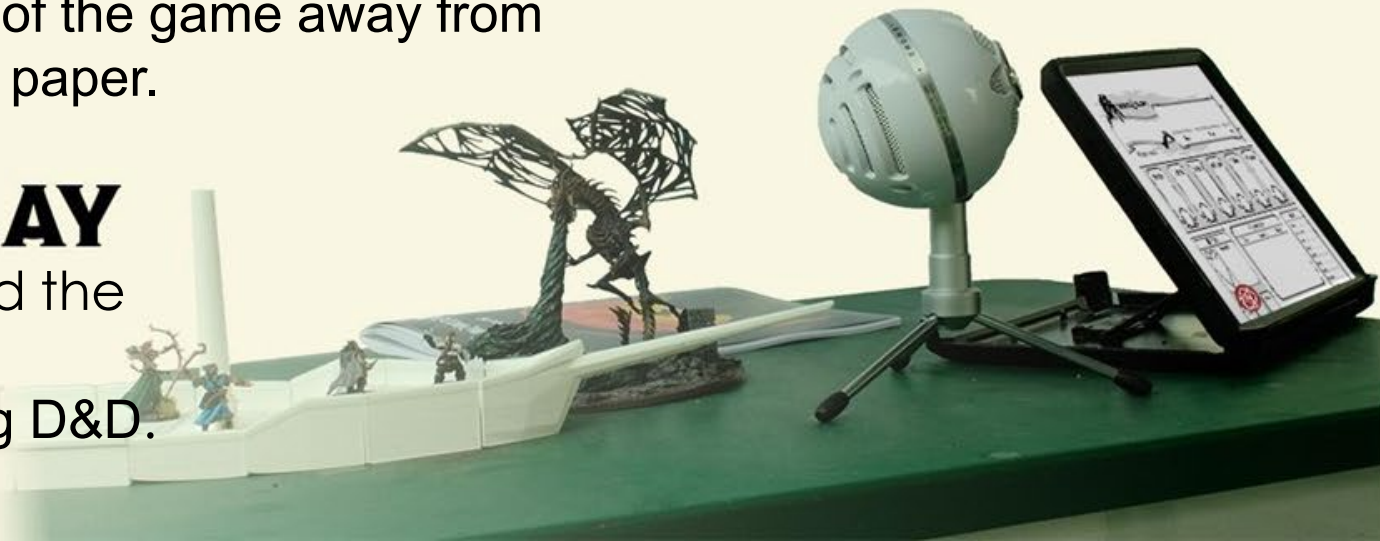
DIGITIZATION

Digitization has shifted many aspects of the game away from pen and paper.
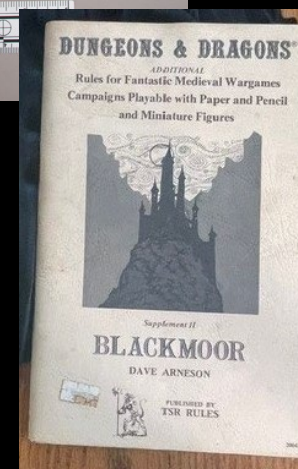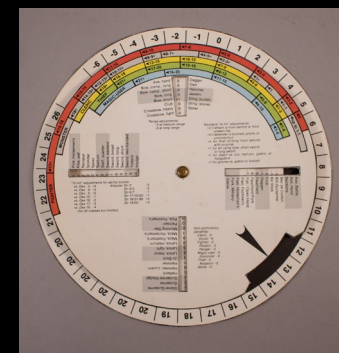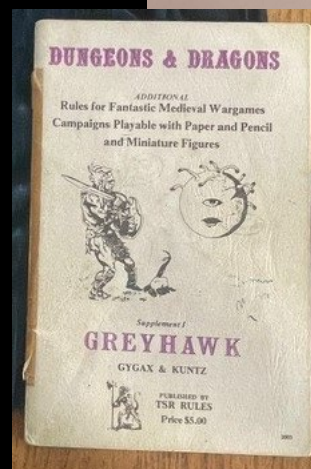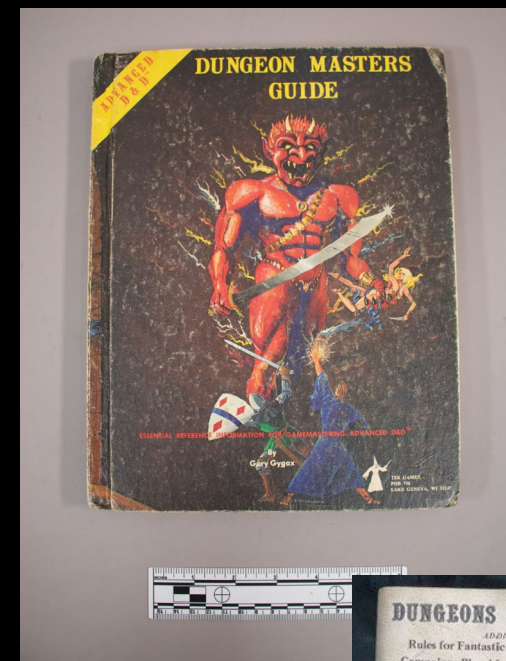
ONLINE PLAY

COVID necessitated the expansion of online resources for playing D&D.
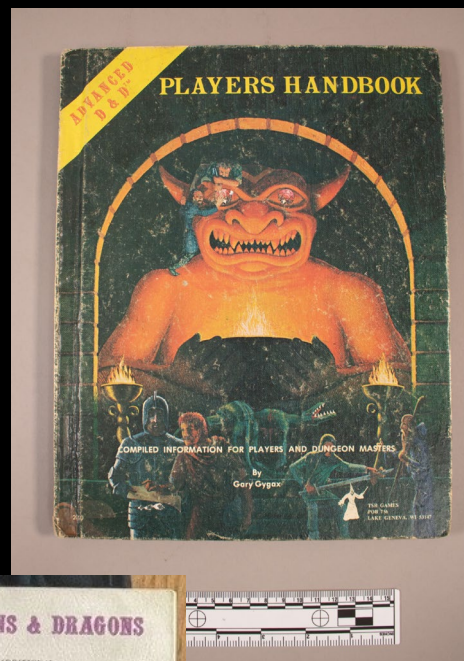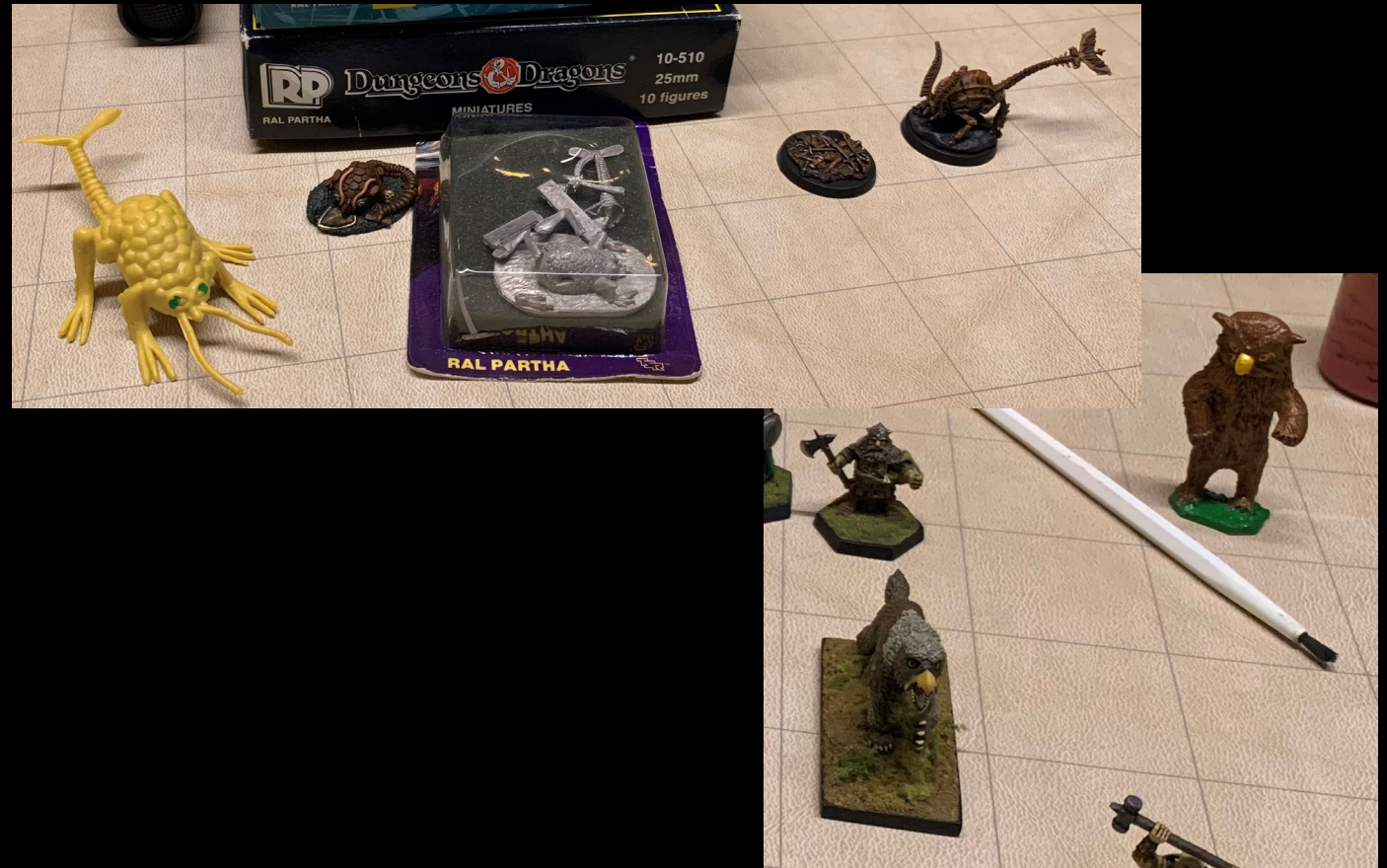
ROLE-PLAYING AND EDUCATION

- Enduring Understanding
- Essential Questions
- Standards

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

- Storytelling is and has been the primary means of transmitting learning throughout human history.

- Oral histories
- Grimm Fairy Tales
- Religious stories and traditions
- Survival skills
- And more…

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

- Roleplaying games build on this tradition of storytelling using the most imaginative tools available; the creative interplay of the storytellers themselves.

- Reading for information
- Reading non-fiction
- Creative narratives
- Public speaking
- Empathy
- Group Dynamics

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do role-playing games help to build interpersonal relationships, empathy, and other positive social constructs?

- How does interactive storytelling differ from conventional storytelling?

- How can informal learning environments contribute to the foundation of hard skills?

- How do role-playing games facilitate equity and diversity in representation?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What other essential questions can you think of?

  - How do roleplaying games enhance problem solving and analytical skills?
  - How do roleplaying games help students consider multiple perspectives?

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Standards Alignment: English Language Arts

Wisconsin Adventures education materials can help meet or exceed a wide range of English Language Arts standards.

Please see DPI's publication Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts to see a breakdown of each anchor standard listed below.

From DPI's Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts:

"To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts…By reading informational text, students build a foundation of knowledge that will also give them the background to be better readers."

Anchor Standards for Reading

Overarching Statement: Read and comprehend a variety of complex literary and informational texts for many purposes (including enjoyment), including texts that reflect one's experiences and experiences of others. This includes independently and proficiently understanding grade-level text.

Key Ideas and Details

Anchor Standard R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly/implicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Anchor Standard R2: Summarize key ideas and details in order to identify central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development.

Anchor Standard R3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

Anchor Standard R4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Anchor Standard R5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Anchor Standard R6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text, drawing on a wide range of diverse texts.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Anchor Standard R7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats.

Anchor Standards for Speaking & Listening

Listen to understand and adapt speech to a variety of purposes, audiences, and situations in order to meet communicative goals. Be able to justify intentional language choices and how those choices differ for culture and context.

Comprehension and Collaboration

Anchor Standard SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Anchor Standard SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Anchor Standard SL3: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Anchor Standard SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Anchor Standards for Language

Demonstrate an understanding of how language functions in different cultures and contexts. Apply this knowledge to meet communicative goals when composing, creating, and speaking, and to comprehend more fully when reading and listening. Be able to justify intentional language and convention choices and explain how those choices differ for culture and context.

Knowledge of Language

Anchor Standard L1: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Anchor Standard L2: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases in grade-level reading and content; use context clues, analyze meaningful word parts, consult general and specialized reference materials, and apply word solving strategies (for meaning) as appropriate.

Anchor Standard L3: Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Anchor Standard L4: Demonstrate an ability to collaboratively and independently build vocabulary knowledge when encountering unknown words including cultural, general academic, and discipline-specific terms and phrases; use vocabulary appropriate to the context and situation.

Conventions of Standardized English

Anchor Standard L5: Discern when and where it is appropriate to use standardized English and demonstrate contextually appropriate use of the conventions of standardized English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Anchor Standard L6: Discern when and where it is appropriate to use standardized English and demonstrate contextually appropriate use of the conventions of standardized English capitalization, ion, and spelling when writing.

Standards Alignment: Social Studies

Content Area: Social Studies Inquiry Practices and Processes

Inquiry Practices and Processes can and should be used within all social studies disciplines and, as such, is an "umbrella strand" covering all content strands.

Standard SS.Inq1: Wisconsin students will construct meaningful questions that initiate an inquiry.

Standard SS.Inq2: Wisconsin students will gather and evaluate sources.

Standard SS.Inq3: Wisconsin students will develop claims using evidence to support reasoning.

Standard SS.Inq4: Wisconsin students will communicate and critique conclusions.

Content Area: Behavioral Sciences

SS.BH1: Wisconsin students will examine individual cognition, perception, behavior, and identity (Psychology).

BH1.a: Individual cognition, perception, and behavior

BH1.b: Personal identity and empathy

SS.BH2: Wisconsin students will investigate and interpret interactions between individuals and groups (Sociology).

BH2.a: Relationship of people and groups

BH2.b: Cultural patterns

SS.BH3: Wisconsin students will assess the role that human behavior and cultures play in the development of social endeavors (Anthropology).

BH3.a: Social interactions

Content Area: Economics

Standard SS.Econ: Wisconsin students use economic reasoning to understand issues.

Econ1.a: Choices and decision-making

Econ1.b: Incentives

Content Area: Geography

Wisconsin Adventures takes place in a fantasy version of Wisconsin. The included maps are for game reference only and should not be used as part of a literal exploration of Wisconsin's geography. Inherent in the game are maps that include cardinal directions, scale, and legends.

Content Area: History

Students in Wisconsin will learn about the history of Wisconsin, the United States, and the world.

Wisconsin Adventures is filled with people and references to Wisconsin's past, however, it does not align with the history standards in meaningful ways without an educator creating projects or lessons surrounding the historic content. Please see the *Historic Inspirations* section of this document for a look at the many historic people and places in Wisconsin Adventures.

Content Area: Political Science

Standard: SS.PS4: Wisconsin students will develop and employ skills for civic literacy. (Partial)

PS4.a: Argumentation

PS4.b: Compromise, diplomacy, and consensus building

Standards Alignment: Science and Mathematics

Role-playing games have been built around basic mathematical conventions since their creation. Using a combination of dice, hit points, armor class, and various statistics, players consistently use addition, subtraction, and multiplication any time they play the game. Additionally, players must be able to read charts and graphs, scales for maps, and more, that show relationships between numbers and their game effects. Finally, students must use inherent math and science modeling to predict the results of their actions within the game, leading to discussions among groups and peers as they puzzle out the best approach to slay a dragon, solve a puzzle lock, or rescue the town from goblin invaders.

"Math is the creation of people—people working together and depending on one another. Interaction, cooperation, and group communications, therefore, are key components of this process. Students also help generate part of the content of instruction as well. They participate in the physical event that will generate data which becomes the vehicle for introducing mathematical concepts. Cooperation and participation in group activities, as well as personal responsibility for individual work, become important not only for the successful functioning of the learning group, but for the generation of instructional material and various representations of the data as well" (Moses and Cobb 2001, 120) P. 214 Wisconsin Standards for Mathematics.

"Mathematics becomes joyful when children have opportunities to learn mathematics in ways they see as relevant to their identities and communities and when they are encouraged to explore, create, and make meaning in mathematics" (NCTM 2020, 18). P. 214 Wisconsin Standards for Mathematics.

"*Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.*" – Albert Einstein
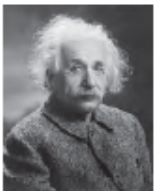
GETTING STARTED – GAME MECHANICS

- The System Reference Document (SRD 5.2.1)

https://bit.ly/4j8SWNf

GETTING STARTED – TOP TEN LIST

1. Your **six ability scores** define what your character is good, great, and not-so great at (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma).

2. Your **class** is your career choice: What are you in this world?

3. In-game character **identities** are up to you: Who are you in this world?

4. If you can **describe** what you want to do, there is a skill roll for it.

5. **D20 "Test"** rolls (saves, attacks, skills, etc); bigger numbers are better

6. **DC: Difficulty Class** - Number rolled must be greater than or = (n≥DC) to succeed

7. **AC: Armor Class** - Number rolled must be greater than or = (*n*≥AC) to hit

8. **HP: Hit Points** (Life total of monsters and characters); Zero is bad for your health

9. **Advantage (good):** Roll two d20 and take the highest number

10. **Disadvantage (bad):** Roll two d20 and take the lowest number

GETTING STARTED – THE IDEA

- What do you want students to learn?
  - HISTORY – MYTHOLOGY – CULTURE – LITERACY – MATHEMATICS – SCIENCE
- What's your hook?
  - Look to local myths, children's stories, interesting locations, that your students may know

GETTING STARTED – THE IDEA

- Brainstorm list of ideas for adventures (5m with partner)
- Hint: Keep to a single idea at first
  - Myth?
  - Place?
  - Mystery?

GETTING STARTED - MAPS

Inkarnate - https://inkarnate.com/

Use your graph paper to create your map!

- Common Scales
  - Indoors: 5' squares
  - Outdoors: 10' squares or more
- Players generally move 30' a turn

Inkarnate - https://inkarnate.com/

GETTING STARTED - ART

https://www.adobe.com/products/firefly.html

GETTING STARTED - ART

https://www.HeroForge.com

GETTING STARTED – ORGANIZATION

- D&D and other RPGs work best in small groups of 5-6 players

- Session Zero – Set Expectations

- Have enough time (Sessions: 1-4 hours; Campaigns: Days…)

- Consider an after-school club

- Collaborate with your art teacher

- HAVE FUN! Roll dice, slay monsters, and save the town. Be the heroes of your stories!

GETTING STARTED – CREATE A BOOK NOOK

Create a Book Nook with fantasy themes:
- J. R. R. Tolkien (The Hobbit; LOTR)
- Robert E. Howard (Conan)
- Terry Brooks (Shannara)
- Hickman/Weiss (Dragonlance)
- Fritz Leiber (Fafhrd & Gray Mouser)
- Terry Pratchett (Discworld)
- Roger Zlezany (Amber)
- Ivan Van Norman (ABCs of D&D)

GETTING STARTED – OTHER RESOURCES

Educator Resources
The World's Greatest Roleplaying Game

Your source for resources and advice on bringing
Dungeons & Dragons into your classroom or school.

https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/educators

Other Fun Ideas
- Myths & Legends Summer Camp
  - Sessions for lower and upper primary age campers
  - Beast of Bray Road matching game
- Gary Gygax Day (8-3-2025)
  - 2024 – 700+ Hodag Hunters
  - 2025 - ??? Beast Hunters
- Play – Make – Learn: Aug. 21-22

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EXTRA! EXTRA!

TWO CENTS 2¢ EACH DAILY

📍 BRAY ROAD

CITIZEN MISSING, TOWN PANICKED

Local tavern keeper Kub of Kub's Tavern reports that beloved Citizen Wade has gone missing. In an interview with a *Bulletin* reporter, Kub shared, "Wade got into a scuffle with some strange animals near Ole's farm a few months back." Kub recalls Wade may have sustained a bite to the arm, although this remains unconfirmed. Other strange attacks and disappearances of similar nature have been reported for several weeks in the southlands. Officials have yet to determine the animal responsible for this mayhem.
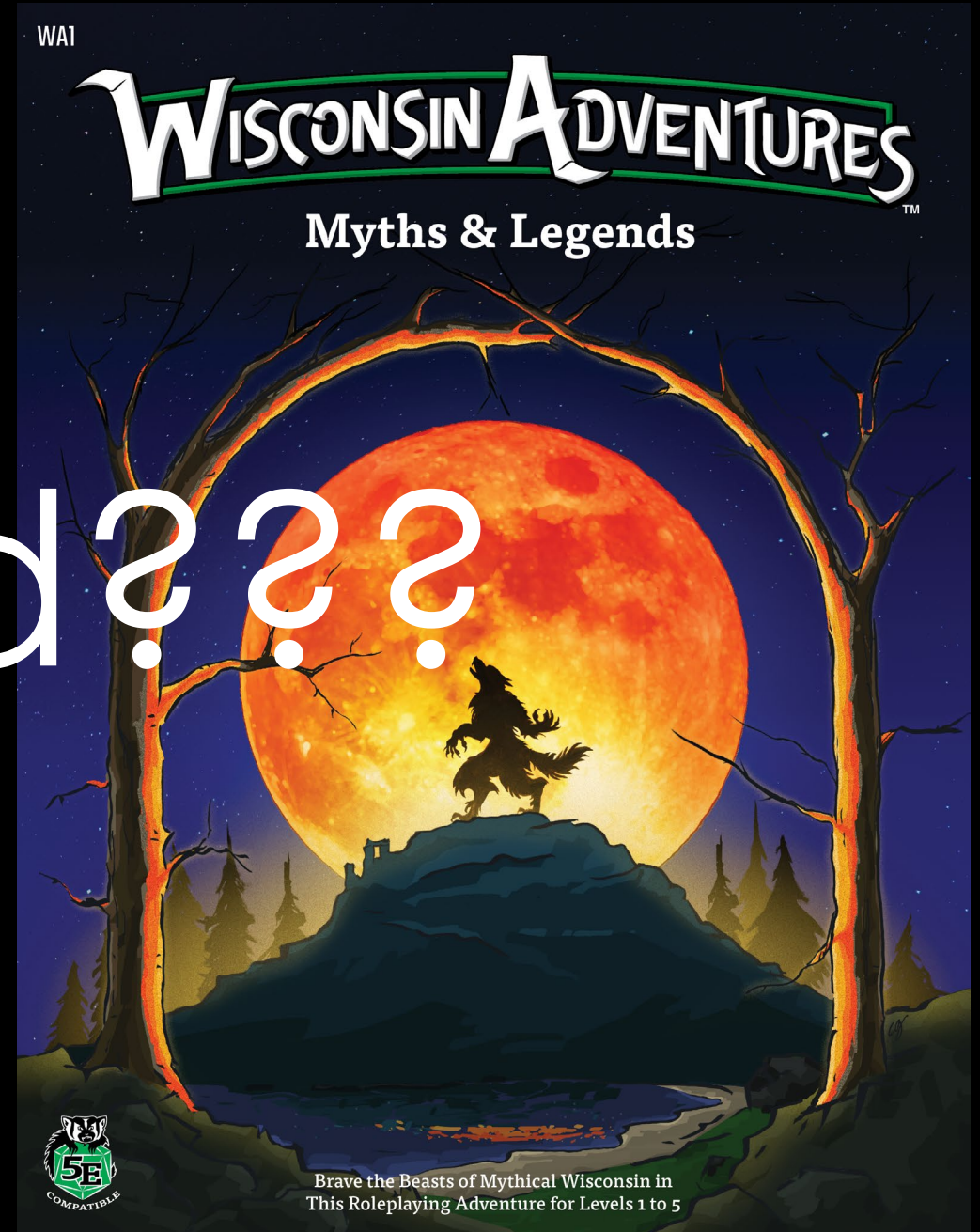
Kub's *Rub Some Dirt in It* Paste: four doses for all your healing needs.

Now available at Wade's Inn.

- Three full adventures
- Full set of standards
- Historic Inspirations
- Website: https://wihist.org/3ODZwGF
- Questions: education@wisconsinhistory.org

The End???

WA1

WISCONSIN ADVENTURES™

Myths & Legends

Brave the Beasts of Mythical Wisconsin in
This Roleplaying Adventure for Levels 1 to 5

- Adventures in the Driftless
- Full set of standards
- Historic Inspirations
- Website: https://wihist.org/3OD7wQF
- Questions: education@wisconsinhistory.org

WA2

WISCONSIN ADVENTURES ™

Dreams & Nightmares

Brave the Lands of Mythical Wisconsin in
This Role-playing Adventure for Levels 5 to 8

by Kurt Griesemer

5E COMPATIBLE