

SLY FLOURISH'S  
**RETURN OF THE**  
**LAZY DUNGEON MASTER**



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## APPENDICES

# THE 2016 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS DUNGEON MASTER SURVEY

This book makes frequent references to the 2016 *Dungeons & Dragons* Dungeon Master survey, conducted at the Sly Flourish website between October 28 and November 28, 2016. This appendix contains a summary of the results of that survey. You can find the full results, along with the raw data, at [http://slyflourish.com/2016\\_dm\\_survey\\_results.html](http://slyflourish.com/2016_dm_survey_results.html).

Survey respondents came from multiple online *D&D* communities, including the *Dungeons & Dragons* Google Plus community, the Reddit *D&D* Next community, the ENWorld forum for *D&D*, the Facebook *D&D* community, and on Twitter. There were a total of 6,600 responses. The results below have all been rounded to the nearest percent.

Here are the summarized results relating to games and game preparation.

### FREQUENCY OF GAMES

- More than twice weekly: 2%
- Twice a week: 6%
- Weekly: 43%
- Twice monthly: 26%
- Monthly: 13%
- Less than Monthly: 10%

### LENGTH OF GAMES

- About an hour: 1%
- About two hours: 5%
- About three hours: 28%
- About four hours: 44%
- About six hours: 17%
- About eight hours: 4%

### PREPARATION TIME

- None: 2%
- About 15 minutes: 4%
- About 30 minutes: 10%
- About an hour: 23%
- About two hours: 24%
- About three hours: 14%
- About four hours: 8%
- More than four hours: 14%

### OTHER RESULTS

In addition to providing a strong sense of the relationship between play and prep time for GMs, the survey covered a wide range of other information.

## Primary Game Play Locations

- Home: 55%
- Roll20: 16%
- Another private location: 14%
- Local game shop: 5%
- Another public location: 4%
- Another online site: 2%
- An equal mix: 2%
- Fantasy Grounds: 1%

## Campaign Worlds

- Personal setting: 55%
- Forgotten Realms: 38%
- Another D&D campaign world: 5%
- A non-D&D campaign world: 2%

## Types of Adventures

- Personal adventures: 64%
- Published adventures: 36%

## Combat Style

- 5-foot gridded combat: 63%
- Abstract maps: 19%
- Theater of the mind: 18%

# TIME SPENT ON PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

Part of the survey broke out the time spent on individual DM preparation. The results are as follows.

## Story and Adventures

- None: 6%
- 5 minutes: 7%
- 15 minutes: 18%
- 30 minutes: 26%
- 1 hour: 26%
- 2 hours: 8%
- More than 2 hours: 10%

## Campaign and World Building

- None: 8%
- 5 minutes: 6%
- 15 minutes: 17%
- 30 minutes: 24%
- 1 hour: 23%
- 2 hours: 8%
- More than 2 hours: 14%

## Combat Encounters

- None: 9%
- 5 minutes: 12%
- 15 minutes: 22%
- 30 minutes: 26%
- 1 hour: 21%
- 2 hours: 5%
- More than 2 hours: 3%

## NPC Development

- None: 10%
- 5 minutes: 20%
- 15 minutes: 28%
- 30 minutes: 24%
- 1 hour: 13%
- 2 hours: 2%
- More than 2 hours: 3%

## Exploration and Roleplay

- None: 16%
- 5 minutes: 17%
- 15 minutes: 25%
- 30 minutes: 23%
- 1 hour: 13%
- 2 hours: 3%
- More than 2 hours: 3%

## Treasure and Magic Items

- None: 23%
- 5 minutes: 31%
- 15 minutes: 25%
- 30 minutes: 13%
- 1 hour: 5%
- 2 hours: 1%
- More than 2 hours: 1%

## Props and Handouts

- None: 45%
- 5 minutes: 20%
- 15 minutes: 15%
- 30 minutes: 11%
- 1 hour: 6%
- 2 hours: 2%
- More than 2 hours: 2%

# FACEBOOK DUNGEON MASTER SURVEY RESULTS

Before and throughout the writing of this book, I posted a number of small polls on the fifth edition *Dungeons & Dragons* Facebook group, containing more than one hundred thousand members. I posted these polls to gauge how DMs view various topics when it comes to *D&D* game preparation.

The results are not perfect, as they don't represent a true random sampling of all DMs. They are, however, better than any one person's guess or opinion, or a bunch of biased personal anecdotes. You can find more survey results like this on the Sly Flourish website at [http://slyflourish.com/facebook\\_surveys.html](http://slyflourish.com/facebook_surveys.html).

Here are the survey questions, the results, the number of respondents, and the date of the poll.

**“How do you use the official published hardback *D&D* adventures (*Curse of Strahd*, *Storm King's Thunder*, *Out of the Abyss*, etc.)?”**

**Poll posted June 10, 2017, with 169 responses.**

- 42%: “I do not run the official published hardback *D&D* adventures.” (71 responses)
- 26%: “I moderately alter published adventures to fit my campaign.” (44 responses)
- 21%: “I run them as they are written with very few changes.” (36 responses)
- 11%: “I significantly alter published adventures to fit my campaign.” (18 responses)

**“When running a *D&D* monster, do you roll for monster damage or use the listed static damage?”**

**Poll posted July 15, 2017, with 530 responses.**

- 90%: “I roll for damage.” (479 responses)
- 10%: “I use the listed average damage.” (51 responses)

**“Do you play in *D&D* Adventurers League organized play games, whether real life or online?”**

**Posted July 23, 2017, with 427 responses.**

- 24%: Yes: (104 responses)
- 76%: No: (323 responses)

**“Do you regularly have to deal with disruptive players?”**

**Poll posted July 30, 2017, with 82 responses.**

- 20%: Yes (16 responses)
- 80%: No (66 responses)

**“Do you enjoy preparing your *D&D* game?”**

**Poll posted August 5, 2017, with 427 responses.**

- 94%: Yes (403 responses)
- 6%: No (24 responses)

**“When running a D&D game, do you use the *Monster Manual* right at the table to look up stat blocks? Do you reformat and reprint them? Do you use some digital tool to look them up?”**

**Poll posted August 12, 2017, with 453 responses**

- 70%: “I use the *Monster Manual* at the table.” (316 responses)
- 16%: “I reformat and reprint monster stat blocks for use at the table.” (74 responses)
- 11%: “I use some digital tool to look up monster stat blocks at the table.” (52 responses)
- 2%: “I use something else to look up monster stat blocks at the table.” (11 responses)

**“What is the highest-level D&D campaign you’ve run or played in?”**

**Poll posted August 17, 2017, with 269 responses.**

- 3%: 1st to 3rd (8 responses)
- 16%: 4th to 6th (44 responses)
- 25%: 7th to 9th (66 responses)
- 13%: 10th to 12th (36 responses)
- 20%: 13th to 15th (55 responses)
- 7%: 16th to 18th (20 responses)
- 15%: 19th to 20th (40 responses)

**“For fifth edition *Dungeon Masters*, do you roll your dice in the open or hide them?”**

**Poll posted August 22, 2017, with 914 responses.**

- 70%: “I hide my rolls” (635 responses)
- 30%: “I roll in the open” (279 responses)

**“Fifth edition *Dungeon Masters*, do you plan NPCs ahead of time or improvise them at the table?”**

**Poll posted August 25, 2017, with 121 responses.**

- 3%: “I improvise nearly all of my NPCs at the table” (4 responses)
- 28%: “I mostly improvise my NPCs at the table” (34 responses)
- 52%: “I prepare about half of my NPCs ahead of time and improvise half at the table.” (63 responses)
- 14%: “I mostly prepare my NPCs ahead of time”: 17 responses)
- 3%: “I prepare nearly all of my NPCs ahead of time” (3 responses)

**“DMs, how do you build monster encounters when preparing your D&D game?”**

**Poll posted August 28, 2017, with 263 responses.**

- 57%: “I use monster challenge ratings as a rough gauge of difficulty and improvise encounter balance from there.” (149 responses)
- 26%: “I don’t really balance encounters. I choose the type and number of monsters based on the story and situation.” (68 responses)
- 10%: “I use *Kobold Fight Club* to balance encounters.” (26 responses)
- 5%: “I use another online calculator to balance encounters.” (12 responses)
- 3%: “I use the encounter building guidelines in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*.” (8 responses)
- 0%: “I use the new *Unearthed Arcana* encounter building guidelines for balancing encounters.” (0 responses)

**“D&D players, of the three pillars of D&D game play, which do you enjoy the most?”**

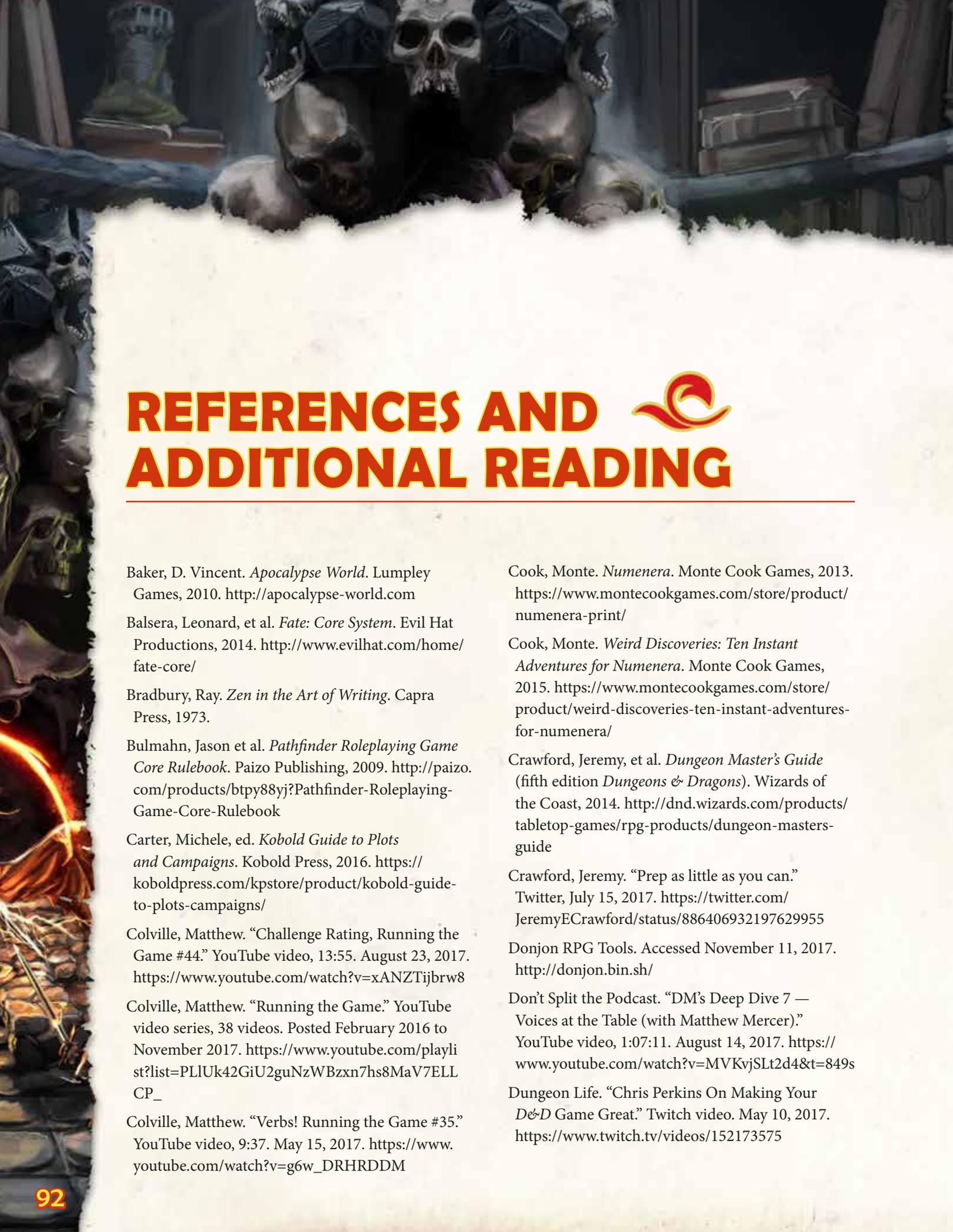
**Poll posted August 31, 2017, with 158 responses.**

- 59%: NPC interaction and roleplaying (94 responses)
- 27%: Exploration and investigation (42 responses)
- 14%: Combat (22 responses)

**“5e DMs, do you regularly alter monster hit points during combat?”**

**Poll posted September 1, 2017, with 523 responses.**

- 70%: “Yes, I both increase and decrease hit points during combat.” (368 responses)
- 25%: “No, I don’t modify a monster’s hit points once the battle has started.” (129 responses)
- 4%: “Yes, I increase hit points to increase the challenge.” (19 responses)
- 1%: “Yes, I reduce hit points to speed up combat or improve pacing.” (3 responses)
- 1%: “I don’t even track hit points.” (4 responses)



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**GAMEMASTERS HAVE ACCESS TO A LOT OF TOOLS TO HELP US RUN OUR ROLEPLAYING GAMES. Our monster books and bestiaries give us piles of foes to throw at adventurers. The various guides for Gamemasters are often filled with nonplayer characters, treasures, and story-building tips.**

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