

DungeonMorph Delving (v0.51)

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Run a GM-less tabletop role-playing game (RPG) game (solo or co-op) with this one page of rules (front & back), one page (front & back) of charts, and our DungeonMorphs.

Setup

1. Pick a game system you find simple or know well for character generation & game rules. Make 4 PCs.
2. Pick or roll for a quest goal, prior caves' purpose, and rumor/quest start (Each is a section on another page.)
3. Make a list of likely foes based on the setup so far. Ex: If the caves are a bandit hideout: A three bandit checkpoint; two bandits escorting a prisoner; six bandits practicing; six bandits resting; bandit leader & two others guarding; etc. Keep in mind your system's guidance for balancing encounters.

Add a couple of not directly related ideas: maybe the bandits disturbed a colony of vermin, or the bandits activity awoke an artifact, or a nearby underground race has heard them. We have a helpful list of creatures on another page.

4. Pick a random initial tile with an entrance (corridor goes to the top or bottom edge). Each tile has a number and large icon code (for example "6-Pyramid") and areas marked with letters.
5. Start with a "Occupied Factor" of 3. This determines how likely an area has someone/something there. In each new area, we roll a d6 and if the result is less or equal to the number someone is there.

Delving Process

1. When entering a marked area, consider your group's approach. Are they being careful? Sneaky? Searching? Then roll a die and add that the quest number to the result. Look at the chart of icons for the appropriate row & column.
2. Combine the icon, Occupied Factor, group's approach, foe list, and the quest goal to determine what happens. The icon is sort of an idea generator like a Rorschach diagram. Is the "net" a discarded net, a net-like creature, a trap involving a net or something else? If stuck, roll again and consider the two icons together. Or look at another row's option for the same column. Many area types have two or three rows/sets of options.
3. If the encounter gets noisy use the same steps as in #2 to determine what is in the nearest location—if it is someone, use the Oracle to determine if they notice and if come to help.
4. If the area was unoccupied, add 1 to the Occupied Factor. If the PCs were sneaky/being careful add another 1. If the party fought with something, subtract 2 from the Occupied Factor.
5. Each time the party searches, there is a 1-in-6 chance of an encounter (even if they just had one). Determine the encounter as in step #2. If there is no encounter, add 1 to the Occupied Factor.

Example

Here is an example using the process above:

1. Moving into an area: Roll d6 and add the quest number. If you rolled a 5 and are running quest 3, use column 8 (5+3). Then if you're on the 6-Pyramid DungeonMorph, and entering area K, the icon is a foot hitting a wire.
2. What does that icon mean? Using that foot hitting the wire and the starting Occupied Factor of 3, we roll a die. Maybe we're lucky and roll a 4, so no one is there. But then what does this icon mean? Well, if the bandit entrance doesn't have guards, it makes sense that it is either an alarm or trap. We can ask the Oracle (see page 2) "Is this a trap?"—either a straight roll or we can weight it by adding or subtracting one. Let's say it is a little more likely it is a trap, so we add 1. But we roll a 1, so even at 1+1=2, it isn't a trap. So plausibly it must be an alarm. This is where the party's approach matters. Were we being careful/sneaky? If so, we've got a shot at noticing the wire. If not, then perhaps only a special character (like a thief) has a chance, depending on your game's rules.

What if it were a trap? If the story so far suggests a specific trap idea, use it. If not, scan the icons sheet randomly until one reminds you of a trap result like boulders falling or an explosion (we already know the trigger is a trip-wire) and then set the dif-

ficulty to notice it, avoid it, and how much it hurts based on the foes who set it. If this is a low-level bandit lair, then maybe someone trained in searching or with a background in thievery has a better than average chance to spot it; maybe someone of average dexterity has an average chance to avoid it; and it only does minimal (one weapon hit) of damage. But if an established cult is hiding in the caves and they hired experts to make traps, all of that will be more difficult.

What if the Occupied Factor roll indicated someone is there? Look at our icon, quest goal, and foe list to see what comes to mind. If this is the main entrance to the bandits' hideout then we could reasonably use our three bandit checkpoint idea. You may also look at the various lists of foes (next page) for ideas of something unexpected, but fitting, to add.

3. If the encounter gets noisy (fighting the guards or the trap goes off or just that the PCs argue) we need to check nearby. We need to roll our Occupied Factor with the same chance as before. If it doesn't indicate a foe, then we don't need to do more. But if foes are nearby we check: If we're in area K of the 6-Pyramid design, we should determine what area C is and perhaps L. We'll say L is around a corner and unlikely to hear unless things drag on. So rolling a d6 and getting a 1 then adding 3 (the Quest number) makes 4. The icon for C is a pick axe. Since it is occupied, then perhaps it is a couple of bandits using pick-axes to enlarge/reshape the area. Do they hear the party as they work? Ask the Oracle—possibly after each round of combat. (If it weren't occupied, then it might be left behind mining equipment.)

4-5. Steps 4&5 are basic mechanics and don't need examples.

Solo/Co-Op Mindset/Add-on Rules

1. Often, a description might tell you more than a character would know at first glance. Do your best to ensure your characters' actions match what the PC knows.
2. Can the party act before something (trap, spotted by foe) happens? If they were being careful give them Spot checks or something similar—but remember the Occupied Factor increases more when the party is careful. If they aren't being careful, only certain PCs/situations should have a chance to act first.
3. As the quest unfolds, when it makes sense ask the Oracle about the quest goal. Ex: Does this cell have the person we seek?
4. For major Oracle successes/failures, or if things just get slow, add a Complication or Boon (see next page).

Using Other DungeonMorphs

You can use these charts and system to explore any cavern map (and one could expand them to dungeons too). If you're concerned about knowing too much of the map in advance, set it up and cover it on one day, then use it a few days later. Or change it up a bit as you explore—for example, ask the Oracle "Is this corridor actually a room?"

But we've designed this system to use our DungeonMorph sets. And with them, you'll only see part of the map at a time (and you can cover part of the map when you place it). So it acts as if you have learned a bit more of the caverns in advance (in game it might be because you hear water, feel a breath of air, overhear a foe describe a couple rooms, find a partial map, etc.)

As you move into each logically separate area within a DungeonMorph, look on the chart of icons for what best describes the area (blocked corridor, large cavern, etc.) and use that for step 1 & 2 of the Delving Process. The sample maps here are pre-coded with letters to help. If your map is not pre-coded, the icon chart describes what each row is: corridor, large cavern, etc.

These rules come with sample cavern DungeonMorphs in a new format: 3.5"x2.5" standard poker size. This gives new ways to connect them and close them off using the designs instead of relying on you to close them off during use (but you can still do that too). But the white hash-marks of each show multiple ways to connect them with each other or to our prior 2.5"x2.5" square DungeonMorphs. Two examples are on another page.

DungeonMorph Delving (v0.51): Setup & Oracle

Quest Goals

Use these (and the rumors and caves' purpose) as is or just to start your own brainstorming.

1. Smuggler's Hideout – The cave serves as a den for savage humanoids, bandits, etc., and the party must infiltrate or clear it.
2. Resource Extraction – The cave has rare materials like mithral or alchemical herbs essential for a powerful enchantment. Rule: Each time the party finds a plant or ore/crystal icon roll d6. If under a count (starting at 0), the resource is found instead. Otherwise, increment the counter.
3. Rescue Mission – A missing villager or lost child was last seen entering the cave. The party must save them before it's too late.
4. Stolen Relic – A legendary artifact, such as a sacred idol or wizard's grimoire, was stolen by savage humanoids or cultists. The PCs need it. It may be creating undead or attracting beasts.
5. Beast Hunt – A dangerous monster (or nest) lairs here, threatening the area. Rule: Each time a beast is found roll d6. If under a count (starting at 0) the beast is the type the party seeks.
6. Sealing a Rift – A planar rift, cursed portal, or magical disturbance festers in the cave's depths, unleashing horrors unless the PCs intervene. Rule: Same as #5, but the rift is in that location.

Rumors/Quest Starters

1. Someone has gone missing by the caves...
2. The party is attacked on the trail near the caves!
3. Miners beg the party to rid the caves of beasts.
4. Strange magics emanate from in the caves.
5. An item needed for a cure is only found in the caves.
6. An earthquake has re-revealed the caves. What caused it?

Major Boons

1. The party finds an important clue about the quest.
2. An area can be closed off for safe-ish rest.
3. A key foe's health is ailing already.
4. There is infighting amongst the opponents.
5. The goal is nearby (increase chances on Oracle).
6. The next sentient foe the party meets will have answers.

Major Complications

1. An item the party found is used to track them.
2. The PCs identity is passed on to foes' allies.
3. While the party was in the caves, ___ happened.
4. Reinforcements (for the foes) arrive!
5. Most of the party's provisions have spoiled.
6. Competitors arrive also seeking the goal.

Prior Purpose of the Caves

Sometimes it helps to have an idea of what the caves are used for (or were because the purpose may change over time) to help your Oracle questions and answers. Here are a few ideas:

1. Bandit hideout (for any creature type: humans, elves, dwarves, kobolds, orcs, etc.)
2. The area was a mine that was thought depleted or abandoned. Or rumors of a find have started
3. Cult meeting place. Were there sacrifices? Entities contacted?
4. Tombs for a forbidden religious sect.
5. Gateway to an underworld, hades, or dimension.
6. Place where criminals, the insane, etc., were banished. Possibly to be sacrificed to a creature/entity.

Creature Ideas

Here is a categorized list of common cavern creatures to help you brainstorm a foe list. If needed, ask the Oracle to make them stronger ("giant", add a power, etc.) or weaker as needed:

- General: Basilisk, Grick, Carcass Crawler, Ettercap, Grick, Hell Hound, Owlbear, Rat, Rust Monster, Scorpion, Snake, Stingbat, Wolf, Wyvern
- Humanoids (evil or not): Azer, Deep One, Drow, Duergar, Gnom, Gnome (Deep), Goblin, Hobgoblin, Kobold, Lizardfolk, Minotaur, Mushroomfolk, Orc, Troll, Viperion. And Humans, Elves, Dwarves, etc.
- Amphibious: Crocodile, Chuul, Frog, Hydra.
- Water: Kraken, Merfolk, Octopus, Piranha, Sea Serpent, Sahuagin.

- Blend in with Caves: Cloaker, Darkmantle, Roper, Piercer.
- Hiding/Camouflaging: Bat, Doppelganger, Invisible Stalker, Mimic, Shadow, Spider.
- Plant: Yellow Musk, Myconid, Assassin Vine, Blight, Corpse Flower.
- Burrowing: Ankheg, Purple Worm, Remorhaz
- Oozes: Gelatinous Cube, Gray Ooze, Ochre Jelly
- Trash-Eating: Otyugh, Shambling Mound
- Madness-Causing: Gibbering Moulder.
- Undead: Ghast, Ghoul, Mummy, Skeleton, Vampire, Werewolf, Wight, Wraith, Zombie

ORACLE

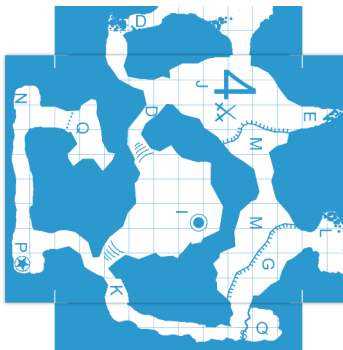
Often, you'll wonder about some details. Are the guards on alert? Is there a table here? If it is reasonable, let it happen. If it makes a difference roll a d6:

1. No, and something is worse for the PCs.
2. No, just no.
3. No, but something mitigates the situation.
4. Yes, but something isn't great for the PCs.
5. Yes, just yes.
6. Yes, and something is great for the PCs.

If circumstances give the PCs a bonus or detriment, add/subtract 1 from the d6 roll. Example of something worse: The guards are alert, AND have a dog! Mitigative example: guards are alert, but hear something else nearby. Roll or pick from the Random Complications and Random Boons charts for ideas.

Final Points

Add new tiles as the party approaches an edge. Rotate them/change them up as desired. Should the corridor end there? Should a spot have a secret door? Check the Oracle and if so, change/add it. It is also possible designs might not match up height-wise: an area on one side was leading from a ledge, on another it wasn't. Feel free to add stairs, have one corridor lead to a new design on another level, or explain that gentle slopes made up the difference.



Left: A rectangular DungeonMorph placed above another, using the white hash marks to know how best to line them up. This way it has just a main entrance (top) and right side entrance. **Below:** Two rectangular and two square DungeonMorphs combined. The right, bottom, and bottom-left edge corridors can be exits, or more designs can be added, or one can say they are dead-ends, slope to a new level, lead to a single small cave, etc.



DungeonMorph Delving (v0.51): Helpful Charts

All of the tables below can be expanded upon by your own imagination: If a Name is 'Shira', make it Shyra or Shirella if you wish. And some options are purposely general ideas: If Hair is 'Unusual Color' it may be natural red (if uncommon) or died blue or green. For multi-column charts, you can pick all one row for something quick or pick among each column for more diverse options.

2d6	Random Complications
2	Reinforcements (for the foes) arrive!
3	A recently used non-weapon item breaks.
4	The party leaves some tracks or evidence.
5	The foes learn some secret about the PCs.
6	The environment changes (rumble, smoke, etc.)
7	The PCs are giving off a strong scent.
8	The party is overheard by something or someone nearby.
9	Something here isn't what it seems.
10	A questionable action by a PC turns into a bad rumor later.
11	A wound turns into an injury (chronic, disease, etc.)
12	Foes (current or next met) are infused with extra power.

2d6	Random Boons
2	This area can be easily secured/guarded as a resting place.
3	The party learns a clue about the mystery.
4	The party finds creature tracks.
5	There is fresh water or air (small vent) here.
6	The party hears/notices a clue about the next area.
7	There is a person-size shaft leading up or down.
8	They find a minor item. Ex: Salvageable ammo, extra torch, etc.
9	The next foes are distracted.
10	The party learns about a key foe's weakness
11	The next foes are already injured.
12	The party finds a major helpful item: healing potion, etc.

Minor Treasures (For real loot, use your game's treasure tables)

2d6	Sentient Creatures'	Sentient but Savage	Non-Sentient
2	Book of notes of area (favors owed, etc.)	Quality (but smelly) article of clothing	Fossilized remains
3	Instrument	Good quality weapon	Kindling/rags
4	Phosphorescent fungi	Carved bones/dice	Eggs
5	Tool: hook & string, flint & tinder, etc.	Small food stash, unspoiled	Bones
6	Mementos (necklace, statuette)	Necklace of worthless metal scraps	Handful of coins
7	Personal writings	Handful of coins	Shiny rocks
8	20-100 coins	Whittled trinket/toy	Tatter-cloth bed
9	2-4 minor gemstones	Good quality tool	Corroded weapon
10	Crystal (to direct light)	Mementos from its kills	Half eaten vermin
11	2-4 spell components	Mirror shard	Fungus patch
12	Map of the area	Rusty keys	Crystal

2d6	Cave Sounds	Cave Smells	Cave Features	Items Left Behind
2	Crickets?	Smoke	Ice formation	Map drawn on wall
3	Slithering	Flowers	Steam vent/hot spring	Non-sentient loot (above)
4	Stomping	Smoke	Area looks carved	Old bedroll
5	Eery quiet	Mushrooms	Crystals	Broken arrows
6	Whistling	Clean air	Water dripping	Rotten food
7	Water drips	Poop	Cave moss	Tracks
8	Shifting earth	Grass/Moss	Fungus	Tattered clothes
9	Rustling	Garlic/Onion	Vein of metal/ore	Campfire (near narrow vent)
10	Crackling	Decay	Narrow shaft out	Old mining tools
11	Bird? call	Oranges	Slime puddles	Cairn
12	Horn	Roasting meat	Fissure (to lava?)	Warning on wall

















































2d6	Guttural Names F/M/Sur	Lyrical Names F/M/Sur
1	Brana / Bofar / Crowder	Alara / Cymbiir / Alathia
2	Dagra / Garum / Fogoch	Chanel / Elaran / Cadra
3	Duris / Killin / Krekellis	Daena / Eldrin / Kalanos
4	Gimna / Stigur / Slaker	Kyrrha / Morthil / Restila
5	Naryn / Thrain / Sokmor	Shira / Reylor / Seskitan
6	Tevia / Valdi / Ventle	Viserra / Valyun / Uvala
2d6	Old Engl. Names F/M/Sur	More Names F/M/Sur
1	Ashlye / Asbury / Ayers	Arilie / Danfer / Elm
2	Chelsea / Edgar / Eaton	Halie / Finrin / Norbusk
3	Ethyll / Hollis / Holme	Kelfa / Normin / Riverisk
4	Hayley / Oswyn / Nash	Marel / Orton / Burrow
5	Holleigh / Otess / Parry	Shaeri / Wilmo / Sipslip
6	Selwyn / Stoney / Stark	Ysre / Vinias / Tumblick

	What are the Foes Doing?	
2d6	Sentient Creatures	Non-Sentient
2	Gambling among themselves	Resting in a cozy spot.
3	Training animal companions	Watching carefully for pray.
4	Arguing with each other	Fixing its burrow, nest, etc.
5	Worship (ritual, dance, etc.)	Eating. But if more food comes...
6	Practicing (fighting, study, etc.)	Guarding eggs or young
7	Looking around	Sleeping (but easily awakened)
8	Cooking/Eating	Grooming/cleaning itself
9	Dozing (Sleeping if in quarters)	Drinking from a small pool
10	Fixing tools/tending camp	Licking mineral deposits
11	Planning next raid/quest/etc.	Echo-calling for mates
12	Mining/Working	Fighting over territory

2d6	Hair	Face	Body
2	Unusual Color	Scar	Emaciated
3	Mohawk	Broken nose	Scrawny
4	Bald	Many piercings	Slim
5	Topknot	Very pale or tan	Lean
6	Braids	Makeup	Average
7	Tied w/trinket	Naturally pretty	Fit
8	Unkempt	Very round or long	Muscular
9	Styled mustache	Bad teeth	Burly
10	Styled beard	Puffy or thin lips	Stocky
11	Unusually long	Huge forehead	Chubby
12	No eyebrows	Burned	Obese

2d6	Mannerism	Attitude	Need/Desire
2	Explains too much	Demanding	Owes gambling debt
3	Sickly cough	Gregarious	Prove him/herself
4	Sniffles/Runny nose	Jovial	More help for their farm or business.
5	Weird laugh	Deceptive	Get a guy/girl's attention
6	Adds "eh" or similar often	Cautious	Help his/her kids
7	Gestures often	Content	Hungry or Thirsty
8	Stares often	Realistic	Exhausted
9	Always scratching	Suspicious	Find their missing _____
10	Talks in whisper	Altruistic	Glorify their god
11	Talks in monotone	Distracted	Protection from bullies
12	Quiet, few words	Ill-tempered	Get out of this boring life

DungeonMorph Delving (v0.51): Location Idea Icons

		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A	Shore											
B	Corridor											
C	Cavern											
D	Corridor (Blocked?)											
E	Dead End											
F	Water											
G	Corridor w/Ledge											
H	Shore											
I	Well/Fountain											
J	Large Cavern											
K	Corridor											
L	Corridor w/Alcove											
M	Large Cavern											
N	Dead End											
O	Cavern											
P	Statue/Altar											
Q	Secret Area		