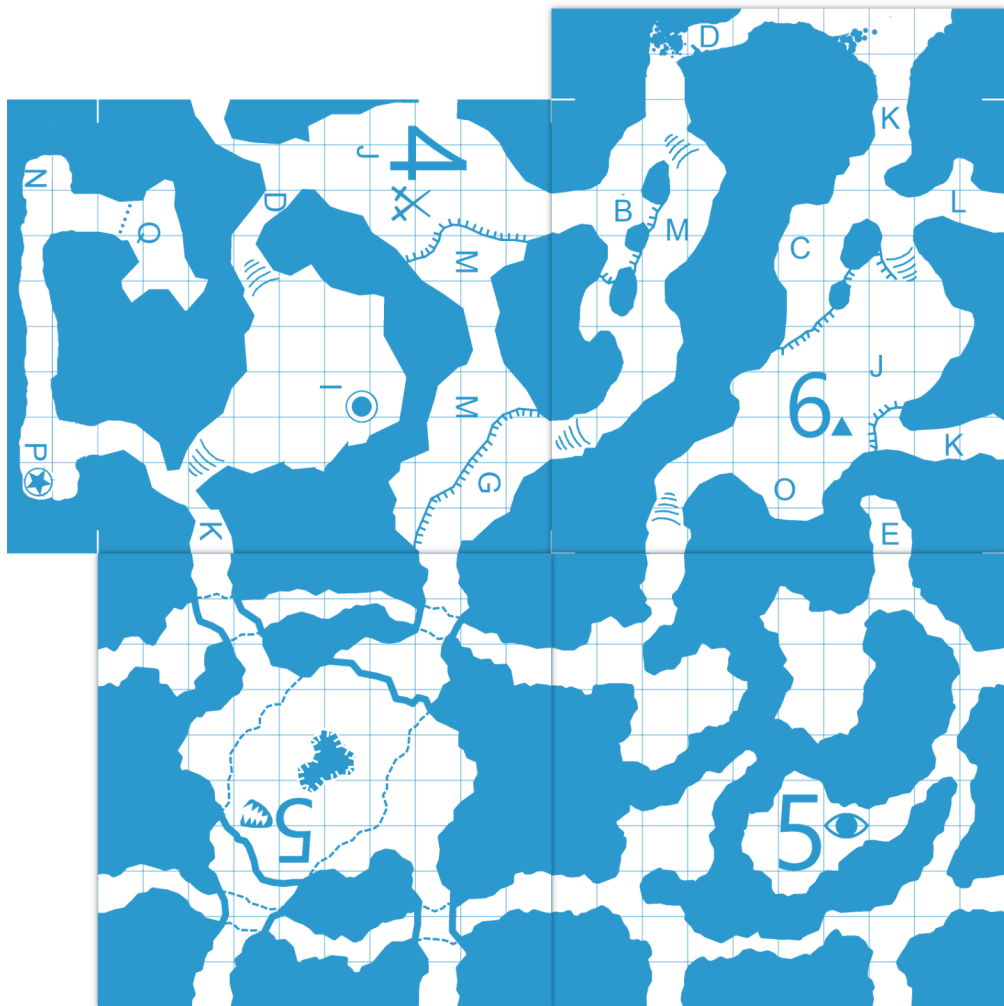


DUNGEONMORPH

Expeditions

A framework to create and run tabletop role-playing game
quests for any RPG system without a Game Master.



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By J. Wetzel; original format by Dyson Logos with designs by
Wetzel, Logos, Billiam Babble, Alyssa Faden, & Glynn Seal.

Useful Additional Charts

Minor Finds (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

Cave Features

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

NPC Features

1d6x2	Old Eng. Name(M/F)	Archetype	Attitude	Mannerism Quirk	Physical Quirk
1	Alfred/Amabel	Innocent	Content	Sniffles often	Face Tattoo
2	Ambrose/Aveline	Everyman	Happy	Annoying laugh	Strange hair
3	Barnaby/Constance	Hero	Distrustful	Overdressed	Notable scar
4	Clement/Cecily	Caregiver	Joker	Dark humor	Limbs too large
5	Edmund/Emma	Explorer	Helpful	Always late	Hairy
6	Gerard/Godiva	Rebel	Selfish	Stares often	Missing ear/etc.
1	Leofsige/Isabeau	Lover	Angry	Taciturn	Limp
2	Osborne/Jacquetta	Creator	Studious	Fawning	Strange smell
3	Reynard/Madalain	Jester	Ambitious	Gestures wildly	Raspy voice
4	Sigeward/Philappa	Sage	Joyful	Fidgets often	Cross eyed
5	Wealdmer/Sybella	Magician	Timid	Over-explains	Hands dry/wet
6	Wilfred/Thomasina	Ruler	Optimistic	Hot temper	Misshapen nose

More Names

Germanic M: Ekebert, Garibald, Hrodulf, Ingomar, Lothar, Odalgar Siegbert, Theodard

F: Adelaide, Farohildis, Gertrud, Hildegurd, Leutgard, Odilia, Rosmunda, Sigilind

Guttural M: Bangnor, Mokpok, Nokbald, Stigur; Crawka, Dagra, Kierki, Triikxa

F: Brekni, Crawka, Dagra, Ekinar, Kierki, Triikxa, Qufrika, Uriza

Lyrical M: Cerrance, Elaran, Eldrin, Fyllass, Reylor, Seevis, Talathos, Valyun, Varios

F: Alaara, Athalia, Chanel, Daena, Kyrra, Lanssa, Mala, Nyenna, Sennia, Viserra

Run a tabletop role-playing game (RPG) without a Game Master (GM)—solo or co-op using this booklet of rules and the game system you enjoy.

Setup

1. Pick a game system you enjoy and find simple/know well. Make 4–6 PCs, split among the players. Use your system for combat, traps, negotiation, etc.
2. Roll for a Quest Catalyst, Start, and optional Starting Twist (pages 3&6).
3. Make a list of likely foes based on the setup so far. Ex: If the caves are a bandit hideout: Three bandit checkpoint; two bandits escorting a prisoner; six bandits practicing; six bandits resting; leader & two others; etc. Think of what activities are likely and what each group is doing. Keep in mind your system's guidance for encounter balance.

Add a couple of not directly related foe ideas: maybe the bandits disturbed a colony of vermin, or their activity awoke an artifact, or an underground race has heard them. For ideas, see a list of creatures on page 6. If you added a starting twist, that may help identify likely candidates.

Choose a “**Foe Type**” number from one to six. If you feel your scenario will have mostly humanoids (orcs, kobolds, bandits, etc.) pick ‘1’. If you feel the caves have mostly non-humanoid monsters, pick ‘6’. Or pick as best fits the quest on a range of 1–6.

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 (Ex: “6–Pyramid”) and areas marked with letters.
5. Sketch the initial area and add notes and expand the sketch as you explore or list the card and location “6–Pyramid K” in your notes.
6. Start with a “**Foe Factor**” of 3. This determines how likely an area has a creature there. In each new area, we roll a d6 and if the result is less or equal to the foe factor a foe is there.

Delving Process

1. When entering an area, consider your group's approach. Are they being careful? Sneaky? Searching? Then roll a die and add the Foe Type number to the result. Look at the chart of icons on pages 4&5 for the appropriate row & column. The sample cards here have letters marking semi-distinct locations. But you can use the icons with any map—just consider what areas are logically separate from each other and the area type: narrow corridor, large cavern, etc.
2. Combine the icon, Foe Factor, group's approach, foe list, and the quest catalyst to determine what happens. The icon is an idea generator like a Rorschach diagram. Is the “net” just a discarded net (if the Foe Factor was low), or a net-like creature, or a trap involving a net or something else? If stuck, roll again. Or look at another row's option for the same column. Many area types have more than one set of options. (Ex: A & H are shores.)
3. If the encounter gets noisy use the same steps as in #2 to determine what is in the nearest location: If it is a foe, use the Oracle to determine if they notice and come to help.
4. If the area was unoccupied, add 1 to the Foe Factor. If the PCs were sneaky/being careful add another 1 to represent the extra time they took. If the party fought something, subtract 2 from the Foe 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 Foe Factor.

Reaching Your Goal

When you have a story idea that may solve the quest, roll the Oracle (pg 7). If the answer is “Yes, and...” that is the goal! (Ex: Your quest is to find a cure and you discover D11 (a flower) Are these herbs we found the cure...? Yes, and...)

Example

Below is an example using the 5-step process from the previous page:

1. Moving into an area: Roll d6 and add the quest number. If you rolled a 5 and chose a slightly better chance of having humanoid foes vs. monsters (Foe Type of 3 out of 6), 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 the starting Foe 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, they wouldn't typically abandon the entrance, so it makes sense that it is either an alarm or trap.

3. We can ask the Oracle (see page 7) "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 $1+1=2$, we get "NO" on the oracle, so it isn't a trap. Then plausibly it must be an alarm because the main entrance wouldn't have no protection. 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 difficulty to notice it, avoid it, and how much it hurts based on the foes who set it and your game system's rules. 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 (equal to a typical "hit") damage. But if an established cult is hiding in the caves they hired experts to make traps, so it will be hard.

What if the Foe 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 from our foe list. You may also look at the list of creatures (page 6) for ideas of something unexpected, but fitting, to add. A purple worm can erupt at any time! You can keep the trip wire idea from the original icon chart lookup by making the ground unstable in some way or perhaps the guards have some tripping ability or weapon.

4. 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 roll against our Foe Factor. 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 Foe Type) makes 4. The icon for C is a pick axe. Since it is occupied, then perhaps it is a couple of bandits ordering miners to mine the area or just the miners using the picks as weapons. Do they hear the party as they work? Ask the Oracle—possibly after each round of combat. (If the area wasn't occupied, it might be left just behind mining equipment.)

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

Quest Catalysts

3

What is the cause of the quest? Roll a d6 or choose to pick a section, then roll or choose again to pick a catalyst. Substitute a foe or object of a different quest if they work better for you. (Make the focus an heirloom instead of an artifact.)

1 Rescue

1. A lost villager from goblins using the caves as a tribal home.
2. The mayor's son, being ransomed by bandits using the caves as a hideout.
3. A noble's favorite pet from the caves where a monster is said to lair.
4. A noble's 15-year old child who ran away to join a thieves guild rumored to be in the caves.
5. A magical beast fled the town zoo (or rare animal handler's pen) to the caves. Semi-tame, it won't last long.
6. Another group of adventures are missing. (Roll again for their original quest).

2 Destroy

1. A dangerous monster (or nest) lairs here, threatening the area. Clear it.
2. A magic heirloom hidden in the caves that will disprove an heir.
3. An artifact revered by a tribe of deep ones, prophesied to doom the world.
4. A cult used the caves to house their dead. Put the bodies to rest properly before they can be misused.
5. The caves are the source of too many subterranean raiding parties. Place magic devices to collapse them all.
6. Evil cave gnomes are constructing a device in the cave. Destroy it.

3 Stop

1. Stop the summoning of an extra-planar entity by breakaway wizards.
2. Stop subterranean humanoids from using the caves as a base to raid the surface world.
3. Prevent a peace treaty from being signed between two underground kingdoms.
4. A cult is building a henge in the caves. Stop them before it can be used.
5. Fire creatures are trying to turn the mountain into a volcano!
6. Close a rift of dark energy opened by a small cult.

4 Explore

1. Find passage through the caves to a hidden valley on the other side.
2. Map a nearly forgotten ancient mine.
3. Find a portal to another realm that is leaking monstrosities to this realm.
4. A monster who made the caves their lair hasn't been seen in a year. Is it still there? Dead?
5. Find the rumored passage to the other side of the mountain—making the nearby town a vibrant trade hub.
6. The long sealed caves have recently been reopened after an avalanche. Check them out for the town's safety.

5 Retrieve

1. An artifact from a hidden shrine protected by sacred knights.
2. The remains of a fallen comrade who was crucified by hobgoblins.
3. Sacred healing water from an underground stream in the now monster infested caves.
4. A sage lives a nomadic life in the caves. The town needs the sage's expertise.
5. Slay a creature that lives in the caves—its scales/blood/fangs/etc. can be used to create a magic item.
6. Livestock are missing. Tracks go to the caves. Who/what has them? Why?

6 Guard

1. Miners from monsters that keep picking them off as they work.
2. A treaty delegation to orcs harrying a town from the nearby caves.
3. The border of two underground kingdoms. Both blame the other for raids. Be the peacekeepers.
4. A noble who wants to claim the fame of finding an artifact in the caves.
5. Guard wizards who must finish a ceremony on Ley Lines in the caves.
6. Escort refugees through the caves to escape out the other side.

These icons serve as a mini-Rorschach test or Tarot Reading approach to determining what is in a location. Use the Foe Type plus a d6 roll to pick a column, Then look at the map to pick the area type—if the map has no letter code in the area, look at the row names and consider which best fits the map area. Note many area types on the chart have two rows.

12									
11									
10									
9									
8									
7									
6									
5									
4									
3									
2									
A	Shore								
B	Corridor								
C	Cavern								
D	Corridor (Blocked?)								
E	Dead End								
F	Water								
G	Corridor w/Ledge								
H	Shore								
I	Well/ Fountain								

If you roll under or equal to the Foe Factor, you encounter a foe. If not, it is not a foe's area (just a minor cave feature related to the icon). Ex: J8 may be a piercer monster or bandits hiding up in the stalactites if it is a foe. If not, it may just be something unusual in the stalactites like an air vent or strange crystals. Whatever you think up! Ask the Oracle if you might introduce something major.

J									12
K									11
L									10
M									9
N									8
O									7
P									6
Q									5
									4
									3
									2

Starts, Twists, & Foes

Call to Adventure/Starts

Need an idea to get the quest started? Sometimes you don't need one from this list—your campaign so far or the Quest Catalyst might suggest a start. But if a start isn't obvious, roll or pick:

1. A PC feels a disturbance: death of a friend, magical ripple, etc.
2. Another adventurer opens the tavern door, screams "the caves are awake" and can only speak gibberish
3. The town is raided by the primary faction in the caves!
4. The party reads a notice board in the town square. One unusual job catches their attention.
5. There's strange weather (magical?) coalescing around the caves.
6. The faction in the caves tries to recruit the PCs for their evil schemes!
7. A dog (or rabbit, mouse, etc.) bounds into town. It has a note tied to it.
8. The town is stricken by a plague.
9. The party is attacked on the road near the caves. There are tracks.
10. A PC is a town militiaman. He learns a rumor about the caves.
11. A sage planning to explore the caves dies suddenly beside the PCs. Their notes describe the mission.
12. Strangers are staying at the inn. They keep to themselves suspiciously.

Starting Twists

You may feel the Catalyst is too basic. Roll/pick a twist to add another layer:

1. The primary foes are pawns of a darker power whose true servants lie in wait.
2. An item the party is given will be used to track them.
3. The original foes have awoken creatures from deeper below.
4. There is a hidden section of caverns—nothing has entered for millennia.
5. The caves are changing unnaturally: freezing; hot; crystalizing; toxic; etc.
6. The foes have pre-emptively sent for reinforcements.

Ending Twists

If the main quest seemed too simple or one of these just feels right, roll or pick:

1. The treasure turns out to be fake.
2. An NPC is not their friend after all.
3. The bodies of those creatures we killed earlier are now gone!
4. The party missed a section of the caves. Something important is there.
5. A rival party claims the credit for the party's accomplishments!
6. While the party was away the town was raided!

Creature Ideas

Below is a 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, Carcass Crawler, Ettercap, Grick, Hell Hound, Owlbear, Rat, Rust Monster, Scorpion, Snake, Stingbat, Wolf, Wyvern.

Humanoids (evil or not): Azer, Deep One, Drow, Duergar, Gnoll, Gnome (Deep), Goblin, Hobgoblin, Kobold, Lizardfolk, Minotaur, Mushroomfolk, Orc, Troll, Viperion. Plus Humans, Elves, Dwarves, etc. as bandits, cultists, etc.

Amphibious: Crocodile, Chuul, Frog, Hydra.

Water: Kraken, Merfolk, Octopus, Piranha, Sea Serpent, Sahuagin.

Hide/Camouflage: Bat, Cloaker, Darkmantle, Doppelganger, Invisible Stalker, Mimic, Roper, Piercer, 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 Mouther.

Undead: Ghast, Ghost, 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. A table is very likely in the kitchen, but unlikely near the castle wall. If it makes a difference roll d6:

- 1.NO, AND something is even worse.
- 2.NO, just no.
- 3.NO, BUT something mitigates it.
- 4.YES, BUT there is a drawback.
- 5.Yes, just yes.
- 6.YES, AND something great for the PCs.

If circumstances give a bonus or detriment, add or subtract 1 from the d6.

Example of something worse: The guards are alert, AND have a dog! Mitigating example: The guards are alert, BUT hear something else nearby. If the oracle roll is significant, for "And" or "But" use the Major Complications and Major Boons charts for ideas.

Major Complications

When using an oracle die, you'll often get an answer of "yes, but..." or "no, and..." Often complications are simple and obvious ("Do we hear anything ahead?" "Yes, but they hear you too!") Here are ideas if you're struggling:

- 1.The ground shakes!
- 2.A slope makes mapping difficult.
- 3.Some of the party's food has spoiled.
- 4.Sound echoes loudly—difficult to sneak.
- 5.A clue they found is false/out of date.
- 6.Quicksand!
- 7.A map they are relying on doesn't match this location.
- 8.Loot found was poor quality or spoiled (rusty swords, potions with broken seals, etc.)
- 9.The party is being followed—foes will learn their strengths and weaknesses.
- 10.The PCs' identity is passed among the foes.
- 11.The environment changes (smoke, rubble, etc.)
- 12.The party leaves tracks or evidence they've been through here.

Major Boons

These are the opposite of complications:

- 1.The PCs find an abandoned camp with supplies. (Rations, maybe rope, etc.)
- 2.The party spots enough edible fungus for one day for each PC.
- 3.The body of a dead adventure is looted, but a potion was missed.
- 4.The next trap encountered is broken or already disarmed.
- 5.The party overhears the next group of foes ahead.
- 6.A map of the immediate area is scribbled on the wall.
- 7.The next secret door the party passes was left open or obvious.
- 8.A note on a foe's body reveals a secret.
- 9.This area can be closed off to make resting here safe.
- 10.A foe is already in poor health.
- 11.There is infighting among the foes.
- 12.The party finds tracks.

More Details

Solo/Co-Op Mindset

1. Often, a description might tell you more than a character would know at first glance. Just 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 similar—but remember the Foe Factor increases more when the party is careful. If they aren't careful, only certain PCs/situations should have a chance to act first.
3. For major Oracle successes/failures, or if things just get slow, add a Complication or Boon (see page 7). What is major? Consider the suspense of the moment. If you're interrogating the boss monster it is major. If you're asking a town NPC it probably isn't.

Other DungeonMorphs/Maps

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. With them, you'll only see part of the map at a time. Even with these you can cover part of the map as you place it. That's not necessary though. Seeing a couple of nearby rooms acts as if you have a feeling of the immediate area. (In game reasons for this: you hear water, feel the airflow, overhear a foe describe a couple rooms, find a partial map, remember a description from a story at the inn, etc.)

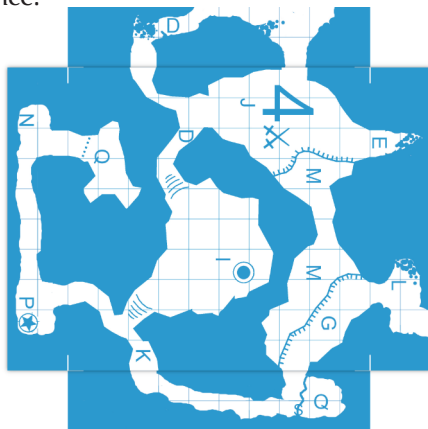
As you move into each logically separate area within a DungeonMorph, look on the chart of icons for what best describes the area (blocked

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" poker card 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). The white tick-marks of each show break points for where to connect them with each other or to our prior 2.5"x2.5" square DungeonMorphs. A simple example is below, a more complex example is on the cover.

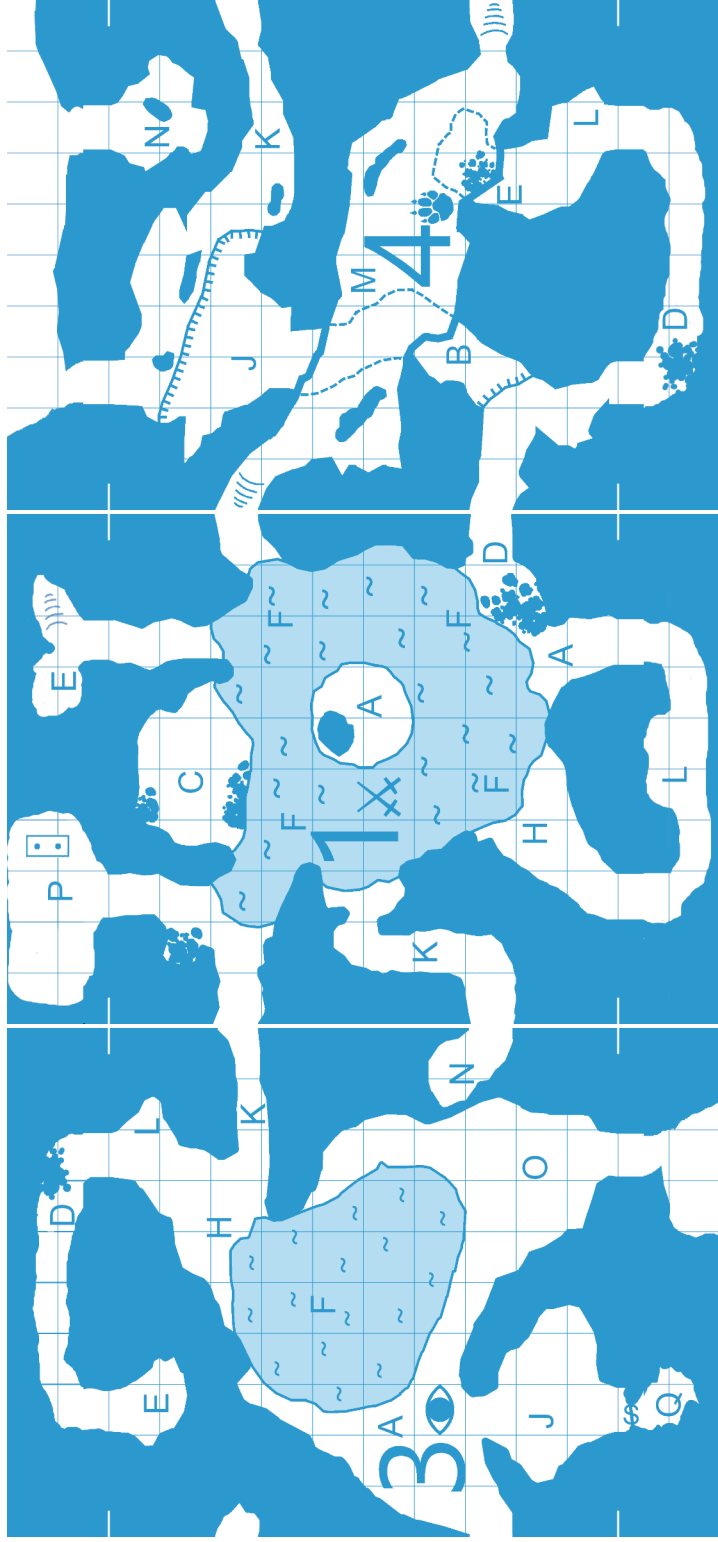
Final Points

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—or just change it to make sense. 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.



DungeonMorph Samples

Cut these out if you don't have cards or use them as separate mini cave systems.
For more DungeonMorphs, go to <https://store.inkwellideas.com>



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