

# Mage Knight Dungeons: An Introduction

Game Designer Mike Mulvihill's primer on how to play

Mage Knight Dungeons is a game of questing, individual fighting and treasure gathering set in the Mage Knight universe. It expands on the tabletop Rebellion game to offer a board game with a role-playing feel.

Mage Knight Dungeons offers simple rules for a two-player game right out of a single starter box, so even if you have never played a miniature game, you can dive right in.

## Heroes, Mage Spawn and You

As a player, you will be maneuvering Heroes through a dungeon. Heroes, introduced in MKD, are a new faction in the Mage Knight universe. Heroes gather treasure, fight monsters and sometimes even battle other Heroes in order to exit the dungeon with the most gold. As Heroes take damage their abilities change and decrease, as indicated on WizKids's famous combat dial, but Heroes have a unique ability to gain levels--actually increasing their abilities from their starting point, just like in a role-playing game. Each figure comes with 5 levels of experience on its combat dial.

There are 32 unique Heroes in the game, so you can create your own Heroic Team by adding up the point values for each figure. But you don't have to start at the first level. Each figure has a point value for each level printed on the bottom. You can have a 5th-level Hero and a 1st-level Hero fighting side by side. Counters are provided so you can keep track of your Hero's level at all times.

Mage Spawn are the denizens of the vast underground chambers your Heroes explore. There are 68 different Mage Spawn in the Dungeons set. These creatures don't have levels like Heroes, but many come in three versions: Weak, Standard and Tough.

Since dungeons are unexplored, a Hero is never sure what may be lurking around the next corner. To keep this element of surprise in MK Dungeons, Mage Spawn are placed off to the side and Wandering Monster Tokens are placed on the dungeon map. When your Hero encounters one of these tokens, you flip it over to reveal a random table of Mage Spawn that may appear.

So you can run into a weak or a strong monster, but you can never tell what you will meet until you enter a chamber. There are 4 different Wandering Monster Tokens in each starter set. Each token offers 11 different results, for a total of 44 different Mage Spawn combinations.

## Moving and Combat

A battle in a dungeon is very different from one out in the open air. So while your group of Heroes works as a team, you don't need to worry about making formations. Each figure moves independently so that fighters can take the point, thieves can operate in stealth mode, and mages and healers can keep their distance from wandering monsters and strike from afar. Movement is based on each figure's speed value. It costs speed points to move through the Dungeon, which is marked off in squares for easy reference. Squares that have hindering terrain have their points costs printed on the square. There are no tape measures to worry about; just count your movement by squares right on the board.

Besides movement, there are plenty of other uses for your speed points. For instance, it costs 4 speed points to enter combat, so your figure can move and attack at the same time if it has to!

Combat is a simple system of rolling two six-sided dice and adding the result to your attack value. Compare this result to your opponent's defense value, and if you equal or exceed it, the opposing figure takes a number of clicks of damage equal to the figure's damage value.

Normally that's where combat ends—but not in MK Dungeons. Whether or not your attack succeeds,

your opponent gets to counterattack. This attack is free—costing no speed points—so your Hero could take as much damage as it just dished out—just as in a real skirmish.

Heroes and Mage Spawn have special abilities, which are printed right on their combat dials and highlighted in colored squares or circles. A special ability may allow the figure to do more damage or offer better protection—or even allow them to fly or cast magic. Special abilities can be lost as a figure takes damage, though; or, in the case of Heroes, they could gain new ones as they go up a level.

### **Treasure and Victory**

The goal of Mage Knight Dungeons is to find treasure, gather it up and leave the dungeon. Treasure is found in the treasure chests. There are 32 unique treasure chests, each with 5 different traps and 6 different treasures. Players set the Treasure Chest trap (found in the lid) to the blank space and randomly spin the knob for the treasure (in the chest). Each player then alternates placing the treasure chests in the Dungeon.

Once a Hero finds a treasure, the player can check to see what kind of trap is indicated on the lid by turning the knob for the same number of clicks he rolls on a six-sided die. Therefore, he never knows what kind of trap his Hero will face. Traps that go off can damage the Hero or even summon new Mage Spawn.

Once the trap is dealt with, the player can then open the chest to reveal the gold or magic items inside. While a Hero can use magic items during the course of the game, gold is more important, since the player who controls the most gold at the end of the game wins. Beware, though: some treasure chests contain booby traps rather than gold or magic items, which can cause even more carnage to your Hero.

### **Stopping Your Opponent**

Another unique aspect of Mage Knight Dungeons is the turn sequence. Each player has a number of activations equal to the number of Heroes they begin the game with. So if you start with 4 Heroes, you get 4 activations. Simple. But you can activate more than just Heroes. In fact, it's your job to make sure your opponent doesn't get to the treasure. And the best way is to use your turn to activate Mage Spawn against your opponent. So with your 4 activations you can choose to move 2 Heroes and 2 Mage Spawn, 4 Heroes and no Mage Spawn, or even 4 Mage Spawn and no Heroes. You can even use an activation to move Wandering Monster Tokens out of your path and into your opponent's way. This flow of activations allows you to play both offense and defense, giving you layers of strategy on every turn.

### **Building the Dungeon**

Mage Knight Dungeon Starter Sets come with a full Dungeon Map for you to play on. These maps are great for learning the game and experimenting with new Heroic teams. But the true fun comes when you build your own Dungeon. The three versions of the Mage Knight Dungeons Builder Kits come with 6 different tiles each. The tiles are printed on two sides and offer different configurations. There are simple rules for using tiles to create your own Dungeons, and since all players contribute tiles to the dungeon, MK Dungeons is never the same game twice.

### **There's Plenty of Room in the Dungeon**

MK Dungeons has many versions and variations. The Lone Wolf game pits two players with one Hero each against each other to see if they can survive alone in the dungeon. Two players can also play the Heroic Team version, in which you and your opponent each create a team to enter the Dungeon. Both versions can be played with more than two players as well. The more players you add, the larger the Dungeon, the more Mage Spawn that appear and the longer the game may take, but it's perfect for those of you who prefer large campaign games.

### **MK Unlimited and MK Dungeons**

For those of you already steeped in MK Rebellion, have no fear. Yes, you can play your MK Rebellion figures in MK Dungeons. Formations don't matter, so any faction can team up, just like in your

favorite role-playing game. The only necessary change is to use the Special Ability Card that comes with MK Dungeons instead of the one for MK Rebellion, since MK Rebellion figures don't gain levels.

The Mage Spawn figures in MK Dungeons can be used just like Mage Spawn in Rebellion. They transfer with no rules changes at all. In fact, you can make much more interesting Dungeons by using Mage Spawn from the various Rebellion expansions.

Heroes are a faction of their own and follow all the rules for formations that appear in Rebellion. If you use your Heroes in Rebellion, they have a default starting level of 5th--their point cost for that level is printed on the base. You can also use Heroes at a lower level (the cost for levels 1 through 4 is printed on the sticker on the bottom of the figure), but it's important to note that Heroes do not gain levels in Rebellion games, so whichever level you choose for your figure is the level they're stuck with. Use the level tokens in MK Dungeons to indicate a Hero in Rebellion that is not 5th level.

Finally, when playing Rebellion with Heroes use the Mage Knight Rebellion Special Ability Card.

### **Expanding Your Experience**

WizKids will fully support Mage Knight Dungeons. There are plans for Mage Knight Dungeons Artifacts--everything from chairs to sacrificial altars to statues of long-lost gods. Their effects can be great or horrible for a Hero. MKD Artifacts are scheduled to be released in February 2002. Future Mage Knight expansions will include Heroes as a standard faction. WizKids will also regularly provide Scenarios on our Web site, and we have tournament plans in motion.