

OPEN DESIGN presents

The **KOBOLD**TM Guide to
Game Design

Volume I: Adventures



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The Three Audiences

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As an adventure writer, you always have three audiences. You need to please all three to be successful. They all want “great adventures,” but that phrase means different things to different audiences.

The first is the editor; if your pitch or query is too dull, too mechanical, or too long, you’ll never get it approved. The other audiences don’t matter because they will never see your work. The editor wants to please his readers; he knows their tastes, he knows what’s being talked up on the boards, he knows what products Hasbro’s marketing department will want him to push. Yeah, the marketing angle is tacky, but true. You can get work playing to the Hasbro release schedule, but you’ll hate yourself. I don’t recommend it. To please your editor, write a pitch on a topic that you know his audience loves, and do it in a way he hasn’t seen before. Easy, right?

“The players are the ultimate word of mouth authority, who will recommend your adventure or pan it to others, despite never having read a word of it.”

The DM is the audience you need to please next. The person who edits has to like your work, acquire it, and publish it, but someone reading it needs to respond to it. What do DMs like; what do they need? You know all this, but sometimes it’s easy to get distracted. DMs like enough backstory to understand the setup, without so much detail that they can’t import something into their own campaign. They need concrete, short readaloud text that sets up an encounter. They need accurate stats, ideally ones that they can’t just pull from the **Monster Manual**. And they need a compelling sequence of encounters with some transitions. Most of all, it has to be exciting fantasy, with creatures and villains that are ideal for fun gameplay.