

The Campaign Companion

How to beef up your adventures with extra challenges and merge them into a campaign

This article is not about creating adventures, it's about taking the adventures you already have and make them better. This can be done in different ways, broadly speaking by adding challenges which make these adventures last longer (which is typically a good thing), but also anchor them in your fantasy setting, creating the illusion that the adventures were created within your own world, rather than being the module of the week.

The random approach can be great, especially if you're leaning more toward "hack and slash" more than toward role-playing. Opening doors, rolling for surprise, fighting monsters, looting, maybe searching for secret doors, rinse, repeat, is an excellent pastime for a while. But if you have a viable group willing to invest their time, you should also have a viable campaign worthy of their investment. This article is for the DM who discovers that he or she isn't entirely sure what's going to happen once the current adventure is over. This is where a common thread may help you to find a clear direction.

It is assumed that you have access to adventures. This could be whatever you produce on your own, or whatever you find online. Apart from the wealth of material found on Dragonsfoot, you can access things elsewhere in the form of modules, adventures, even the so-called megadungeons. It could also be an empty dungeon map you've downloaded from wizards.com and filled with your favorite monsters, or a randomly generated dungeon. These can be found online (see Appendix B, useful links) or maybe you rolled your own the old-school way, using the DMG.

Whatever you use of materials, here's a few ideas to help you connect them:

Challenges (riddles, puzzles, and other mind teasers)

Who doesn't appreciate a good riddle? Or a bad one, for that matter. I mean, "What do I have in my pocket?" is a really awful one, though a classic.

This section isn't about traditional riddles, however. Don't get me wrong, I love them. But I'm not so inventive that I can produce them, let alone teach anyone how to. Those you'll have to look up in an old book or online. This is about riddle-like challenges that you can incorporate into your role-playing game. By that I mean that if your players can figure it out using only brainpower (or maybe just remembering the answer), then that's totally fine in my view, but there has to be an in-game way to crack the nut.

There are basically two problems: Knowing too much or knowing too little. In the first case, you may have player who obviously know the answer, yet is too much of a role-player to let his or her dimwitted barbarian know it. Or in the latter, that the riddle is simply too hard, and then the party is stuck.

The first type of problem is the least. The barbarian may have happened to have heard of the problem before and remembers the solution because it was so stupid. Or the player may whisper the solution to the one playing the magic-user with the genius-level intelligence. You should definitely allow either thing to happen. I mean, you want to involve all the players.

In the case where no one knows the answer, there should be ways to get clues. For clerics and magic-users, there are some spells that do so. If you have a thief in the party, I recommend giving him or her some hints based on the general assumption that thieves are very observant and have a lot of common "street" knowledge. All classes can make a sort of contract with the deity of their choosing, promising that if they get inspiration, they will do so and so later. In the right circumstances, this could lead to some interesting role-playing. In all cases, I think you should be flexible and generally award creative play. The players will typically think of something. But have the local sage

know the answer, just in case.

Also remember the effect sometimes known as "the curse of knowledge", which is basically the fact that since you know the answer, you think of it as kind of obvious. This applies not only to riddles, but also to your campaign setting. You may have things clearly outlined in your head, yet you may discover that the players aren't as familiar with it as you. So a reference to "the one-armed king", which to you is screaming Moligar III, may have the players scratching their heads. Instead of being disappointed, think of it as an opportunity to let the players find out more about your world. If possible, present the knowledge in some written form, which the characters can then read, looking for possible clues. That serves as an organic way to introduce them to other stuff they might not need at this moment, the dungeon dressing, so to speak, and helps build your fantasy world in their minds.

Finally, remember that not everyone enjoys mind teasers as much as others. If every session plays out like a Mensa test, some may find it a little too much. They'd rather be killing monsters and taking their stuff. A good fantasy campaign should involve the occasional riddle, but obviously each group must find a balance so that everyone enjoys themselves. If there's a great divide between puzzle enthusiasts and those that would rather spend the whole time role-playing (and/or hacking and slashing), then one solution could be to present the challenges between sessions (homework for extra credit, if you will), so that those who love spending time exercising their brains will have the opportunity to do so without impinging on the gaming experience of the others.

In the following, there is a selection of challenges you may spice up your game with. Some you might want to throw in there just for fun. But if you can link them to something that is a hallmark of your campaign world, then it has the added bonus of making the players feel at home. Say you've just downloaded this great module, and you intend to have the players start this new adventure once they've finished up their current

one, which you designed yourself. You want to have the players think that the module is part of a continuing story. So you insert something in the module that connects to that story. For example, you decide that in your world, there are rumors of the court wizard using his powers to exert undue influence on the king. This wizard is known for bragging about his abilities as a chess player. Then you find a series of challenges with a chess theme (see below), and place them in an extra level in the module. There should also be some extra rewards, and references to the court wizard, maybe clues to bringing him down. Suddenly the module that was created by another author is a part of a story arc that you've created. More on connecting adventures after these challenges:

A) Guess the weakness

The idea is simple. You have an unbalanced fight, and unless the party figures out what to do, they'll be killed or badly mauled. It's not so much a puzzle as a challenge that forces you to think on your feet.

Examples:

Shadow Boxing

The party enters a room that is empty except for a brazier in the center. Suddenly bright tall flames spring into life in the brazier, creating shadows on the walls. The shadows immediately attack their owner. If playing 1E AD&D, an example could be, AC 0, same HD as the PC with 10 hit points pr. HD, two attacks, damage as owner's weapon, 80% magic resistance. You may have to fiddle with the details to suit your needs. The idea is that these creatures are overwhelming, but they shouldn't kill any party members the first two rounds or so.

What does the party do? Defending themselves should be viable, at least in principle, though it should take some pretty lucky die rolling. The solution to the "riddle" is to put out the flames. Placing a shield or similar on top of the brazier is probably the simplest way. Tipping the brazier or dousing with water over also works, except that the fire

flares up one last time, and the shadows persist for another round. Obviously there are several magic ways to deal with it. Here you'll have to use your judgment.

Time Trap

Same principle, different theme. You enter a room with a 4 feet tall hourglass and a silvery gnome (feel free to substitute with an old woman, a minor deity, or whatever age/time symbols apply to your campaign). The gnome activates the hourglass by tapping it and attacks the party. He doesn't do much damage, but he is hard to hit and has many hit points.

Say a mid to high level party would encounter one with 10 HD (60 hit points and regenerates 5 per round), AC -4, and attacks with a short sword (1-6), magic resistance 85%. Worst of all is that each round the party is slowed cumulatively 5%.

It doesn't work as a regular *slow* spell before 10 rounds have passed. Until then it subtracts 1 from to hit rolls and adds 1 to casting time and the gnome's saving throws (cumulatively). If 20 rounds pass, the sands have run out and the party is effectively dead. Again the exact statistics of the gnome is subject to adjustment, depending on the party. It should be possible, but not probable, to defeat the gnome. When I used it, the gnome had 3HD and 15 hp, MR 40%.

In any case, the easy way to defeat the gnome is to turn over the hourglass.

Creating your own.

Obviously, you can use challenges similar to the ones above, but it works even better if it's something specific to your campaign. Maybe the vampires in your setting do have a weakness for garlic, maybe the giants have a fear of mice.

As an example of that, I once played in a Viking campaign. The DM told us he'd done some research on the historical Vikings and gave us a few tidbits as a way of introduction. One of these was that Emil was actually a name used by the Vikings (not sure if that's entirely true, but that's not the point). Many adventures later, we were

captured by a powerful Dark Lord. We were to die in the arena, fighting one monster after another. Our only hope was to guess the true name of the Dark Lord, as he was cursed to obey anyone who used it (but you couldn't just shout out random names, as that would get your tongues cut out). The curse also forced him to give us clues, because one of the monsters spelled backwards would reveal his secret. Well, the third monster we faced was a green slime. With our iron age equipment, we wouldn't have had a chance. You get the drift.

B) As little damage as possible.

These are typically trial and error types of challenges. The idea is to figure out the rules as quickly as possible.

Make a Good Impression

The party needs to get past a strangely looking door. From the door are 121 studs protruding in a 11 by 11 square pattern (again, you can change this to your liking). Beside the door is a note: "Ten crows sat in a bush. An archer killed one with his arrow. How many crows are left?" The answer to the riddle is none, and in order to enter, the characters must press the studs so that they form an 0. If they press one of the studs outside the pattern, instead of it being depressed, they are hit with a bolt of lightning (or an arrow, or other spell effect, or whatever you prefer). You can have several doors, or have the door change "password" each time it is passed. Other problems could be remembering the first letter of someone's name, such as the king or the innkeeper. Or if the party is familiar with the Mubar runes or a similar set of symbols, you can use those. Obviously there's some room for interpretation, and you'll have to adjudicate exactly which studs will trigger a penalty.

Don't Step on The Cracks

A room with a checkered floor like a chess board is a classic. In the first room, black

means "kaboom" and white is safe. For "kaboom" substitute any suitable attack form, say a 3d6 lightning bolt or whatever you like. Not too hard. Later, there's another chess room. But here the rules are different. After some trial and error the party learns they have to move on the squares like a knight (not diagonally - for example: straight, straight, right). Then in another room it's the black squares that are safe. In the next (close to the treasure/exit) there's angry red queen in the room that "takes" the party once they enter a square she can reach. "Taking" means that the party is sent back to square one and suffers a "kaboom". Before they can cross the room, they'll have to find one or more magic knight chess pieces that each allows them to teleport like a knight (as an option, these are consumed when used). Stepping on the cracks means triggering effects from either square.

Depending on the party level, there are all sorts of magic ways to bypass the challenges. You make the rules, so it's up to you whether demons appear if a character tries to climb the walls. Maybe the party's spells don't work, maybe they work just fine. As long as there's some consistency to the rules and the players get a feeling of being allowed to be inventive, anything goes.

Oh No, I Let You Get In My Head

This one is part annoying prank. If you find it funny, by all means use it, but it may not be suitable for all campaigns. Before the party are three doors. All three have words on them, but only the one in the middle has a door handle. The left one reads: "In order to open, say a word of more than three letters that begins and ends with "HE"." The middle one - with the handle - reads "Open this door to get an answer." The door to the right reads: "In order to open, say a word with "ADAC" in it."

Well, if the characters take the bait, they open the middle door and are immediately subject to a psionic blast from a mind flayer (bonus surprise attack). After that, they'll have to kill it. Obviously uttering "HEADACHE" opens both the other doors.

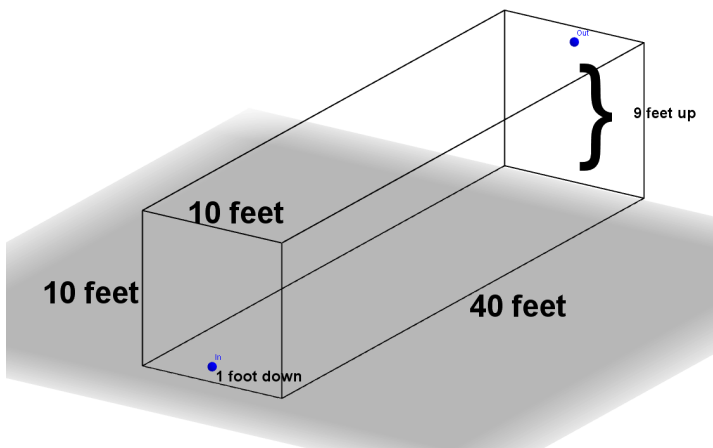
C) Math assignments:

When I presented some of these problems to my players, one of them commented that they were basically math problems. I'm afraid that's true. In my defense, I did not use them in actual sessions, but rather as head scratchers that served as a substitute for real role-playing during a month-long hiatus.

First a classic:

The Spider

The party is stuck. Powerful anti-magic is keeping them locked in. The only way to get out is to have one of them use a special spider climb potion to reach the outside, from where he or she will be able to let the others out. The special potion is the only kind of magic that will work. Unfortunately, the potion only enables spider climbing for 47 feet. And you need not only drink the potion before going in, you need to be touching the walls or floor at all times, or you'll be doomed. But it's obvious that in order to do that, you'll have to climb 50 feet. Is the magic really that precise? Oh, but it is!



The solution is simple if you can think "inside the box". The shortest route is about 46½ feet. If you "fold out" the room as if it was a cardboard box, you would have to move 20 (5+10+5) feet to the side and 42 (1+40+1) forward. If you think of those as the catheti, then the hypotenuse is $\sqrt{42^2 + 20^2} = 46,52$

Annoying loot

Of course there's no such thing as too much loot, but dividing the spoils equally can be hard. If every item in the treasure pile is assigned a coin value, there is a total that just can't be split into equal parts.

If there are 2 in the party, then there'll be one coin left after divvying the pile.

If 3 in the party, then there'll be 2 coins left. If 4 members, then 3 coins left. All the way up to 10 party members, when there'll be 9 coins left.

How many coins is the treasure pile worth?

Some players love these puzzles, whereas they're too cerebral for others. If we return to the challenges that include a bit of action or at least role-playing, there is the "incomplete directions" problem. It could go something like this:

"I buried the key in a small chest exactly a mile north of a spot on the road running from Enders to Servan. I noticed on the map that the spot on the road was twice as far as the crow flies from Fort Karanas as to the Hut of Baba Yaga."

The point is that one of the landmarks is gone. Obviously, you might want to substitute the Hut with something else, such as a gypsy tent/wagon, a hanging tree, a boulder that turned out to be a sleeping galeb duhr. The idea is that the party must work to get the location. Once that's done, then the information that one distance is twice the other is just a convoluted way of defining a new circle.

Door math

Combining the math with "choose the right door" gets you something like this:

You see nine doors labeled 1 through 9, and the following note

"A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H =  I = ->

$A = B^2$ $A + C = D$ $B + E + F = D + H$ $C \times B = E$ $G > I$ "

Here the party can open any door. If it's one of the wrong ones, they meet a suitably tough monster.

D1) Logic puzzles.

These puzzles are a variation on a classic. This first one is more about rule-playing than role-playing, and very specific to 1E AD&D.

Know your scores

The party finds a hallway with six statues of adventurers. The statues are named Belamir, Brachus, Korades, Narvus, Nefalian, and Saladin. And a plaque informs the party that the statues are of an assassin, a druid, a fighter, an illusionist, a magic-user, and a paladin. Unfortunately, the order is random, and the statues are all of the characters in their "civilian" clothes. Now the party must determine who's the assassin, or the statue will come to life and kill them in their sleep. The plaque further tells the party: Saladin has a charisma score of 17. Belamir has intelligence 14, Korades has strength 12, Narvus dexterity 11, Saladin wisdom 13, Brachus and Korades both intelligence 8. Belamir is more intelligent than Nefalian. Saladin is more than one point wiser than Brachus. Saladin has as much charisma as Narvus and Nefalian combined.

Admittedly, this one is a bit "bookish". To throw a little action in there, allow the party to attack the statue of whoever they think is the assassin. If they're right, then he's not much of a threat as he can't use his special skills. If they guess wrong, then make it obvious which class the statue is, and let the party fight for the knowledge.

Five potions

The party comes upon five potion flasks in a row. They are identical and sealed. The party learns the following: Poison is next to Extra-healing. Neutralize Poison is further to the left than Super-heroism. Super-heroism is not next to either Delusion or Extra-

healing. And they find a note: "I thought the flask furthest to the left was Extra-healing or Super-heroism. It wasn't. Goodbye, sweet world."

This puzzle is more what we're going for. It's not entirely based on logic, since in order to solve it completely, you must let the "goodbye" indicate that the flask furthest to the left is poison. However, solving it serves as its own reward, and the party can use other methods, such as identifying or just trying one of them. Note that Neutralize Poison isn't a standard potion, but assume that it works as the spell, or substitute with another.

Finally, another example:

Don't Exit Through the Gift Shop

You see six doors, each with a picture on the front. The images are: A cloud, a (lonely) island, a bolt of lightning, a ship, the sun, and a castle.

Close by is a scroll (or inscription) that reads:

"The road to glory may require fortitude. The road to wealth may require solitude. The road ahead and the first and second road to doom can be connected in stormy weather but the second, third, and fourth road to doom cannot ever be brought together. The third and the fourth road to doom both have water around them and the road ahead and the second and third road to doom man did not invent, but are as he found them.

The solution to the riddle is that the road ahead is the lightning bolt, and the first, second, third and fourth road to doom is the ship, the cloud, the island, and the castle, respectively. So obviously the party should proceed through the door with the lightning bolt. However, the first line of the riddle is not only a hint that they'll be up against a

blue dragon (or behir or similar), it's actually a cryptic clue that there's treasure behind the sun door.

When I played this, the party was so focused on advancing that they missed this. So if you want to use this, you may leave another clue or two elsewhere. In real-life alchemy, the sign for sun is the same as for gold.

D2) The Haunted Study (more logic puzzles)

The kind of logic puzzles that are sometimes referred to as Einstein puzzles are a staple among puzzles in general. If you like them, there's a website [<http://www.logic-puzzles.org/>] that will generate them randomly. I recommend checking it out and see if that type of challenge is anything that might appeal to one or more of your players. Though the puzzles are free, you can't go back and forth on the webpages. So take a few screenshot along the way in order to get the clues needed. More on this in Appendix E.

Unless they're relatively easy, I don't think "pure logic" puzzles belong in ordinary sessions, but they are great as fillers when there's a break in the campaign for some reason, or if you're playing with one or two players.

The Haunted Study

This is an approach I've used a few times. The background story is that a scholar was preparing a diagram with the information. Some moron left the door open, and a gust of wind made the notes fly off the table. As an option, you can dramatize things by writing the information on small pieces of paper, placing them on the table, then blowing on them. At the sight of losing his work, the scholar had a stroke and died on the spot. Now he haunts the study and cannot rest before the diagram is completed. The player can read the scholar's summary of his research, which are the clues. If you're using

the website mentioned above, the trick is to "translate" the information into something that's relevant in your fantasy setting. Since one or more of the clues usually involves comparisons, at least one of your categories of information should be in the form of a number. Examples of categories I've used are [For a private collection of books]: Book Title, Author, Year of Acquisition, and City of Acquisition (when and where the book was bought). [A monograph on the demise of regents - see also Appendix E] King, Nationality, Year of Death, Reason for Death. In principle, the clues presented should be enough, but if the player needs more, the character can then ask the ghost if a combination is correct, such as "did Jorgen Nuxis write *Enchanted brews of the Djugosir*?" The ghost will then answer for a price. For example, a small amount of blood (10% of the PC's full hit points), inspired by the Greek myths. Or you can have the ghost fly into rage and attack the character, only answering after having been defeated.

I also made a very intricate one much in the same style as the statue puzzle above with 7 characters (Name, Class, level, and Constitution Score), and a much simpler one like the potions (bottle order, smell, color). In order to anchor the puzzles in your campaign, you can exchange one or more of the clues with pieces of information from your setting. Maybe it's common knowledge that healing potions have pale bluish hue, or that the Salaki King Lothar II died at the battle of Venikin in 540.

E) The mysterious inscription (codes)

Another "staple" of puzzles is the coded message. Here you have the easy option of writing your message in Word and then searching online for a strange-looking font (examples are *mage script*, *precursor alpha*, *espruar*, *miskatonic*, *meroitic hieroglyphics*).

Some others might look great, but are just fancy versions of normal letters such as *elder futhark*, *angerthas* or *roswell wreckage*. That makes them recognizable, which makes a lot of sense outside role-playing. In this context, however, it kind of defeats your purpose. So if you want to use those fonts, you will have to scramble them first. Write your message,

then go to

[<http://planetcalc.com/2468/>] to make a Vigenère cipher. Unless you intend to torture your players, use a single letter as the key. That merely shifts the letters and makes it a simple replacement code.

If you're going to present the player with the coded message digitally, be warned that even a pdf can be reverse engineered and the font changed back. That won't work if you used the Vigenère encoding, but I generally recommend using a graphics file format, maybe even add some distortion, and/or a tear in the paper, maybe even "hack off" some of the letters for the extra challenge and general fantasy feeling.

Another variation on the theme (pun intended) is the sheet music. There are eight basic notes, and if you use the different durations (the hollow dot, the hollow dot with the pole, the filled dot with the pole, the filled dot with the pole and flag, the filled dot with the pole and split flag), you'll have enough different symbols to substitute for letters and numerals. Only problem is that you'll have to do it by hand (and you'll probably make mistakes, but that only makes it more realistic).

F) Fallen Phrases

In recent years, my personal favorite has been the "Fallen Phrases" puzzle. You can find examples of this in BQ1: The Patchwork Man. They are also relatively easy to produce.

Write the text and go to

[<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/FallenPhraseSetupForm.asp>]

I like to make quotes that are four rhyming verses. If you're stuck for words, online tools such as [rhymezone.com] and [thesaurus.com] may help out.

For more information, read Appendix C.

G) Rebuses and runes

Finally, if you use the Mubar runes in your campaign (available at Dragonsfoot), you can make small rebuses. If you download *The Mubar Runes: A Field Guide*, there's a guide in the zip file, and more rebuses ("problems") at the end of the pdf file.

A lot more of those will appear in BQ2: *The Rune Vault*.

2) How to string adventures together in a campaign

Humans see patterns everywhere, it's simply part of our makeup. It is a little ironic that most of the staples of fantasy role-playing such as magic and monsters are really based on things that are superstitions in real life. Superstitions caused by patterns being recognized even if there aren't any. However, as a DM, you can make this work to your advantage. It doesn't take much, only that you change a few details here and there.

The ideas presented here aren't meant as adventures, they are meant to be incorporated into the adventures you already intend to play. A piece of information here, a henchman of the master villain encountered there, and so on. The object is to glue the separate adventures together with a common story arc, so that your players don't feel they're playing the dungeon of the week, but rather new episodes in the continuing story of your campaign. Let's say you're planning to have the party confront a bad guy at some later point. You may have to flesh him out, maybe a few bodyguards as well. Other than that, you don't need much. Well, perhaps a good name for a shady organization (something along the lines of "the Order of Whispers", "the Seal of Shadows", or "the Kunalt Brotherhood"), and a symbol (a double cross is easy to remember, but any doodle works). Then you sprinkle references to this secret society into the adventures you're playing anyway, maybe the party breaks up a mugging perpetrated by one of the gang members, maybe you can replace a random encounter or two with a few of their thugs. Suddenly the party aren't just exploring dungeons, they're also running afoul of these bad guys.

If you've fleshed out the history of your campaign, this is a good way to use it. Unless you're a demigod ranking up there with Gary Gygax, you're bound to be using material that others have produced, and that's actually totally fine. In my own campaign, I estimate that more than 80% of the stuff I've used isn't my own. But I allow myself a

feeling of pride when my players say that they don't know the difference. That's not entirely true, of course. Since I have no artistic talent whatsoever, presenting them with hand drawn handouts is a strong clue. But my point is that nothing should feel foreign. If at all possible, go through the material and imbed it in your world. You can keep the names or change them, but they should somehow exist within your campaign world. Obviously, there are limits. I admit I had my player characters discover a portal to Krynn, so they could meet draconians. And you may have to use similar tricks if your campaign really doesn't have a place for that great looking Oriental Adventure you want to play.

As a more recent example, I bought the megadungeon Castle of the Mad Archmage from rpgnow.com. I loved it, but it really was just that, a humongous dungeon. I mean, it didn't have much of a rationale. As I've mentioned, that wouldn't have a problem twenty years ago, but I knew that with our current style of play, my players wouldn't enter it unless they had a good reason to. Finally, I had an idea. It was the dungeon lost in time, and where all those cut-off timelines deposited their monsters and heroes. Maybe it didn't make perfect sense, but it worked. All the human encounters were from now defunct timelines, and the mad archmage himself was the disembodied soul of a notorious time wizard who had broken his own rule and traveled back in time in order to change it — with terrible consequences. And now, to save the future, the heroes would have to bring his soul back.

These are just examples of how you can make everything into something that seems to belong in your campaign world. In short, adopt everything that can be adopted. Adjust the rest. And speaking of adjusting: If you happen upon this adventure that you can't wait to play, but that's too high-level for your players right now, it might be tempting to boost the player characters. I wouldn't recommend it. You typically need all the high-level modules you can get your hands on, so save it. Most modules are for starting parties at level 3 at the most. So unless you always make your own adventures, you'll

have access to materials that tend to be too low level. Well, if the party is only slightly stronger than intended, that's typically not a problem. In most cases they'll just progress faster, spending less time resting. But if they are so strong so as to make the encounters lose their edge, then everyone will soon be bored.

If you want to play this great-looking adventure that's really too low level, one solution is to beef up the monsters and linking it to your story arc. The goblins that are supposed to be less than one hit die are now three hit dice, and add 2 to their damage dice. But then, though clearly goblins, they look different. They have strange tattoos, or are gray, or all have nose rings, or whatever, something that links them to the demon lord Ranuzlan. But hey, that's the same demon that the chess playing court wizard or the Brotherhood of Kunalt worship! It's all connected! The point is that the players will feel they've found another clue to solving a mystery that wasn't there to begin with. There are limits to this approach, especially if some problem integral to the adventure can be easily bypassed using high-level magic. Still, it can work quite well in many cases.

Obviously you'll have to work out exactly who or what Ranuzlan is (if you're not up for it, use one of the existing archdemons or devil princes). But then you can place the key to his undoing (the Heart of Truth, a relic that grants *aid* spells three times a day, or something) in the next adventure's treasure pile. And suddenly, that next adventure is also a part of the series.

Resolving role-playing woes

Some DMs may never have this problem, but you might discover that your players are beginning to take role-playing seriously to the point that they need a reason to not only join forces for a single mission, but to continue to adventure together. Why would a druid journey with a wizard? Why would a paladin share his treasure with a thief? Why indeed?

One solution is to create a party that is bound together by origin. They are family, or they are all members of the same thieves' guild, or they are all elves. Obviously that's a viable choice, but it does place severe limitations on character creation, and it also challenges the DM to come up with suitable adventures. I mean, once the elven heroes deal with the undead hordes that threaten their ancestral lands, you'd expect them to go back to singing harmoniously below the leaves of autumn gold. So unless you have a great idea, it should only be used sparingly.

It should be noted, however, that here at Dragonsfoot you can find the all-dwarf adventures OB5 The Old Dwarven Mine and OB6 The Lost Mithral Mine on Dragonsfoot, which could serve as an excellent starting point for a campaign centered on dwarves.

Here's what I've tried with some success:

The Mysterious Purpose

The Ties that Bind. There once was a game by SSI called The Curse of the Azure Bonds. It was one of the first AD&D computer games and it had a lot of kinks. There was supposed to be a role-playing element to it, but like today's WOW players, you never read the text unless you had to. So it wasn't until later when I read through the book version of the adventure (it wasn't very good), that I realized that the characters wake up one day with strange tattoos, and that it meant they were chosen to save the world or something.

It's not an original idea, and it's one I've used more than once myself. Here's a few variations:

The Party That Stays Together Slays Together

This is a binding tool for a party that needs a reason to continue working together. Let's

say they are beginning to wonder if they are in the right group. So they've decided that once they've finished their current job, they'll consider their options. So they find this cache of treasure, each perfectly suited to them, though at first not that powerful. Then they discover that when the whole party works together, these treasures work better, gain new powers, and so on. This was how I introduced the Mubar runes to my players, there would be runes on the different items, and as long as the party held together and performed certain missions, new runes would be added, some affecting the party as a whole. Of course the power behind the items wanted the party to go out and do stuff. The ultimate purpose of the rune items was to stop a mad god from creating a multitude of portals from Hell to the Material Plane.

Pick a Card, Any Card

This I used as a starter for my current group of player characters. Before they met, they each received a tarot card (one of the trumps, technically from my own Bandagora tarot [https://bandagora.wikia.com/wiki/Trionfi_Occulta]). For different reasons, they were told to bring the card to a small village inn (a hobbit in search of his adventurous grandfather read it in a letter left for him; a thief was told she could would be free of debt to the guild if she did this last thing; a cleric was told by his mentor that it was foretold, and so on). They arrive at the inn, and they are the only customers. They sit there staring at each other, wondering why they're all there (kudos to my players, they sat there doing small talk, or exploring the menu for the better part of an hour. Why would they talk to total strangers about their mission?). Finally one of them presents his card to the innkeeper, and immediately demons appear (pretty weak ones, these are all first level characters). Once the demons are dealt with, the innkeeper informs them that the inn is cursed, and that the only way to lift the curse is to collect the cards (that's not entirely true, and the innkeeper had a big part in causing the curse, but that was a bit detective work for the party to work out). It turns out "playing" each card reveals a vision/clue (I

used the Fallen Phrases described above), which leads to a new card. Once the party collects the deck, they can draw from it like a Deck of Many Things. Actually, that was my first idea, and I changed it. Now there is a deeper purpose, which is to forge a powerful group of people able to keep an ancient evil from resurfacing.

What type of evil?

At some point in your campaign, you'll have to consider how the world works, in terms of who the real enemy is. No matter what, there'll be no shortage of monsters and evil forces of corruption, and if not opposed, they will bring the world to the brink of destruction. This is more or less a staple of any fantasy campaign. However, there is a more philosophical question: Is evil like the Christian Devil, a single original evil spreading corruption like the plague, or is evil a part of each person, where the desire to cause the detriment of others is only held in check by a combination of unreliable internal censorship and external consequences? Let's compare two well-known fantasy settings: Middle Earth (home of the Lord of the Rings) with Westeros (home of Game of Thrones). In Middle Earth, basically every evil in the world stems from Melkor. There are two reason for being evil: Either you were born a monster, or you were born good and later corrupted. In Westeros, there is obviously a great and menacing evil, but it's basically just a background noise much like ominous thunder in the distance. The real drama is between the people, who betray, rape, torture, murder, mutilate, and plot against each other constantly.

Why is this distinction important in your campaign? It is, because it should dictate how the characters interact with your world when they're not on adventure. So Bilbo lives alone, and he has a lot of treasure. It wouldn't take long for some burglars to pay him a visit, would it now? Except that hobbits are basically good and so there are no burglars in Hobbiton. In a world where people act more like in Game of Thrones, then if your party returns to their home city with a dragon's hoard, they shouldn't get too drunk

when celebrating their victory. Actually, they'd be even more at risk if they told anyone they were going into the dragon's lair, since they'd be easy pickings for a rival party just after they had killed the dragon. Well, though it's not unthinkable that bad guys would waylay the party and rob them, maybe even kill them, it's not very fun for the players. In general, I think that the characters should be protected from such "realism", unless it's all part of a story. Obviously, a starting character getting his precious heirloom stolen could be a good prologue to a campaign, where retrieving said item would be a major plotline.

In many ways, classic AD&D works like Middle Earth. Unless something evil is brewing, you can relax and enjoy yourself. Generally, the world is a safe place, where the players characters can tell their stories and stash their trophies without worries. If you're going with that approach, time between adventures is more or less filler with a little bookkeeping. There's a benign ruler that doesn't even have to be specified, and time passes without any significant events until evil rears its ugly head, calling the party to arms once more. It's certainly an approach that works, especially if you're not that much into world-building. If this is how you play, I strongly suggest there should be places that only appears to be safe, but where most people are always looking to take advantage of others. So the serving wench will listen for any tidbits she can pass on for a few coppers, an old man will try to sell his treasure map that leads to nowhere, and the local thieves will watch the party for any low-hanging fruit. People aren't evil the way monsters are, they're just greedy, self-serving and indifferent to the sufferings of outsiders. Nothing untoward should happen such places if the party is vigilant. On the other hand, if the local lich wants a few warm bodies to try out the traps in his maze, the townspeople won't hesitate to trick the party into doing it, maybe even drug their food to make sure they comply.

In my own campaign, things are more like Westeros. After all, the Starks and the Lannisters are inspired by the Yorks and the Lancasters of the War of the Roses, from which we have such grisly stories as the Princes in the Tower. The advantage of such a

game setting is that the players feel more immersed. Even home from adventure, they must watch their words and who they interact with. The disadvantage is that the players may not relax, and get slightly paranoid. I suggest that even if your whole world is "grey-zone evil", there should be safe spaces. This could be a city or a whole nation, where people are generally benign, or one or more inns, or an order or organization like the Adventurers' Guild.

As a DM, you have another problem with "evil human nature", namely that this kind of evil is calculating, scheming. Evil monsters just attack what's in front of them. People, however, don't just murder each other left and right. And when they do kill someone - unless they're the local ruler making a point - they usually do so in secret. In fact, mostly people don't kill at all, rather they steal, cheat, and betray each other. Whatever vile acts of back-stabbing they perform should be to their advantage. In other words, you need a detailed world in order to determine what acts make sense.

The sustainable villain

I remember reading the Book of Villains and being very disappointed. None of them were much use in my campaign. It's like this: In the books, Drizzt d'Urden has an arch nemesis, Artemis Entreri. They're both incredibly skilled with the blades, and they square off numerous times. Great reading. However, if the party had Artemis for a nemesis, they'd all be killed in their sleep. He is supposedly a ruthless assassin, after all. And that is probably the biggest problem with bad guys. If they're too powerful, chances are they won't even notice the party, just eliminate them like so many ants if they're in the way. If the player characters is the stronger party, then they'll kill the villain and that's the end of it. This isn't Batman (I mean, even the movies got tired of the weekly Arkham Asylum prison break).

It's frustrating, since I feel that an effective campaign needs good villains, pun intended.

It's all right that some of the bad guys are extremely powerful and that the characters only hear about them, maybe fight some of their agents occasionally. It can be a distant goal to someday bring them down.

So here are a few ideas for what I call "sustainable villains":

The Influential Villain

This could be a merchant or a noble, someone that is very rich and untouchable.

However, everybody "knows" he or she is up to no good. The party may meet this person when they are still low level, and they will have to suffer insults and be called incompetent (though this is unjustified). The more stoic player characters may choose to ignore this, but if someone in the party decides to retaliate, all hell breaks loose as this person is of high station. Under the right circumstances, this could lead to the party being sentenced to fierce punishment. Obviously, after spending one or two days in the dungeon, they'll be pardoned if they undertake a mission (their next adventure). It might not be Batman, but that doesn't make it into Game of Thrones (though obviously King Joffrey would serve as a good inspiration for the villain).

If the party remains in the same region, this person will constantly harass them, try to stop them from getting rewards and/or titles. The party are waylaid by attackers who admit they were hired by him or her, but the confessions of criminals are discounted as evidence. Finally, after cultivating a growing resentment, the party is high level and influential in their own right. They confront their nemesis, and sure enough, he or she is basically some puppet of the illithids/drow/devils preparing to take over the world. "Ha ha ha, you're too late. The Key is already being transported to the depths of Krandia as we speak. Soon the portal will open! Ha ha ha!" Finally they get to kill him, and then they have to rush to Krandia for the epic finale.

The Ghost

On one of their first adventures, the party kills an evil wizard. He should be powerful enough to present a challenge, but otherwise a run of the mill low level bad guy. Then, a few adventures down the line, when the party rounds up a new villain, a mad wizard, he rants madly that they're not going to get him again. Since he was obviously crazy, the characters might not think any more of it. Not all adventures have a bad guy at the center, so probably a few more will pass by before another villain seems to recognize them and insist that they're trying to kill him a third time. Despite his protests, they should do so. The explanation is that somehow the original wizard was turned into a mad spirit capable of possessing other people. That power could quickly give the campaign a dark turn, so the ghost can only take over evil guys who invoke a certain deity or devil to help them accomplish their schemes. At some point the ghost changes tactics and tries a pre-emptive strike on the party. Hopefully they survive, and a sage helps them do a quest that will eventually protect them from being attacked unawares. Frustrated, the ghost proceeds to get revenge by breaking the world (if you're not in the mood for an apocalypse, substitute your own major crisis such as a princess being kidnapped), and the party must find a way to exorcise the ghost. It's kind of implicit that turning undead won't do the trick. They must return to the place they encountered the mad wizard, track down a number of objects tied to the creation of the ghost, complete some ritual, and finally they're ready to resolve the crisis.

Ghost Variant: The Artifact

Instead of having it be a ghost, change the above story to an evil artifact that avoids being destroyed by teleporting to the closest really evil person.

The Guiding Hand

This applies especially when you need a common thread between adventures. It could be a megadungeon, or it could be a handful of short low level adventures that you'd like to

appear to be linked. There are basically two approaches. One is that a person is sending the party out on missions to gather something. The person could be a sage, an elder, a noble, an oracle. Someone who can't do the stuff in person, and needs the party to do it. The "something" could be information, parts of an ancient relic, ingredients for a ritual, mystical rune stones, magic weapons, or the like. The other approach is similar, except that the instructions appear in a mystic way, such as in a riddle, a vision, or the like (as mentioned above, I've used the Fallen Phrases to convey mystery). Regardless of approach, the final objective is usually to avoid something horrible from happening. If you feel your group is up for it, you can have the guiding hand manipulate the party, so that when they think they're gathering stuff to avoid the apocalypse, they're really preparing for it. It's not an option that should be used too often, and if you do, there should be an adventure or two waiting that allows the duped characters to redeem themselves and more.

Appendices

A: Making Maps

B: Useful Links

C: Further Ideas and Examples

D: The Map Adventure

E: An Example of Creating and Converting Einstein Puzzles

Appendix A: Making Maps

For immersion, nothing equals maps. And to make maps of your world, obviously the first part is to have the world mapped out in your head. Then you need to actually draw them, either by hand or using some kind of program. Personally, I have no creative skill and use Campaign Cartographer 3+. It's not cheap, and takes a little learning, but with that, even I can create some great maps. Others can work wonders with image editing programs such as Paint Shop Pro, even free ones such as GIMP or paint.net. Or if you're playing in a world that others created, you can simply find maps online.

No matter how you get your maps, a really great way to present them is to print them on faux leather. All you need is a digital version - and some money. The map in the picture was about the price of an expensive take-away pizza. Reasonable, but postage was twice that, so I ordered one for each of my players.

Now the patron can rummage through his backpack for the map, roll it out on the table, place a mug in each side to keep it from curling up, add a few chess pieces, and go: "We are here... I think the caves are around here... I'm guessing six days travel if the weather holds, and nothing untoward happens."



Fabric printing is available online. I'm sure there are others, but I've had good experience with Contrado, and I'm very pleased with the result. I've used the British outlet (www.contrado.co.uk), but they have home pages in the U.S. and other countries. Obviously, unless you've got money to burn, this is for maps that will be used repeatedly. See also Appendix D, The Map Adventure.

Appendix B: Useful Links

Random dungeons:

<http://www.dizzydragon.net/adventuregenerator/gen>

Online shop for role-playing games, including classics in pdf format and free stuff:

<http://www.rpgnow.com>

Fonts and encryption:

<https://www.1001freefonts.com>

<http://planetcalc.com/2468>

Fallen Phrases generation:

<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/FallenPhraseSetupForm.asp>

<https://www.rhymezone.com>

<https://www.thesaurus.com>

Logic ("Einstein") puzzles (see also Appendix E):

<http://www.logic-puzzles.org>

Textile printing (U.K. home page, go all the way down to the bottom left-hand side to see other nationalities). Also see appendix A:

<https://www.contrado.co.uk>

General DM resources (including traditional riddles):

<http://www.thievesguild.cc>

<http://www.dndadventure.com>

The One Page Dungeon Contest (you can also buy them at Rpgnow):

https://campaignwiki.org/wiki/DungeonMaps/One_Page_Dungeon_Contest

My fantasy setting of Bandagora:

https://bandagora.wikia.com/wiki/Bandagora_Wiki

Appendix C: Further Ideas and Examples:

If you have a smidgen of ability to draw (I don't), visual aids are always great. Images of your world can anchor the players in your setting, and NPCs and places will be more memorable. Pictures can also give the characters clues. It doesn't have to be full-scale Da Vinci Code intricate hidden messages, it can be as simple as putting a key in the hand of someone in a portrait, signaling that that person's room has a secret door or contains something important.

More on "Fallen Phrases":

Let's say the characters are given a puzzle that, when solved, tells them how to get across a floor full of traps. It's much like a chessboard, except that the colors are not just black and white, but also red, yellow, green, orange, and blue. This works best for a low-level party without access to transportation magic (it was originally designed by one of my regular players for his own one-on-one campaign). But obviously you can decide that such magic doesn't work or summons monsters, as will bypassing the traps by mundane means (climbing the walls or trying to embed hooks in the ceiling). The black and white squares will paralyze anyone who steps on them, the yellow and orange are pit traps. The green, red, and blue squares are harmless, but they must be stepped on in the correct order, or you will literally go back to square one by teleportation.

Here's the rhyme:

To cross the floor you need a clue
Black and white will be like glue
First green, then red, then blue
Other colors will swallow you

If you enter that into

<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/FallenPhraseSetupForm.asp>

You will get the following:



Note that there are six lines ("rows", if you will, as opposed to columns). Generally, the more lines, the harder the puzzle. Say you want to make the puzzle easier. The one in the example may not be that hard, but maybe you want a "starter" puzzle, or maybe you've made another one that's just too difficult. If so, you can reduce the number of lines by adding commas, forcing the program to widen the lines. In the example, the two lower lines are unbroken, which means they are shorter. So you add some commas to them, making them longer. Like this:

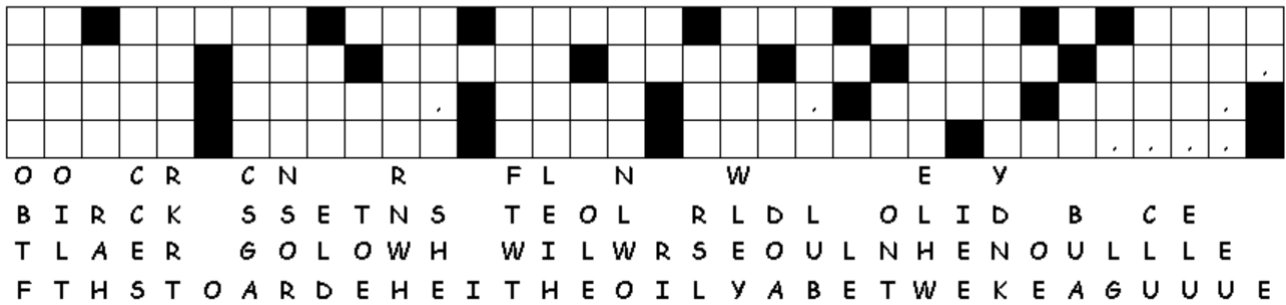
To cross the floor you need a clue

Black and white will be like glue, (note that I also added a comma here)

First green, then red, then blue,

Other colors will swallow you,,,,,

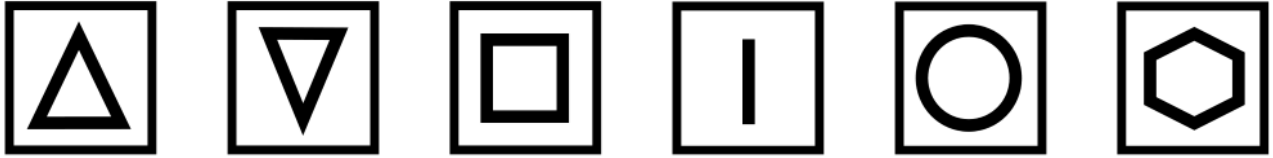
Tread Lightly My Friend(II)



You will then have to use an image editing program to replace the extra commas with black squares, but that shouldn't be too hard.

As you can see, "Fallen Phrases" puzzles are relatively easy to produce. In my campaign, summertime usually means a hiatus from regular sessions. So if we're not doing "side adventures", I sometimes create a few challenges for my players that are optional and that they can do by themselves, occasionally by taking them along on their respective vacations.

Another "Math" Riddle:



The magic armor is behind A, the potion is behind B.

You don't want to open C, D, E, or F.

F is B squared. C has more edges than B. D is to the right of C. E is next to D.

A has more edges than any of its neighbors.

Note that you need some knowledge of math symbols in order to solve this. While most would probably agree that a square is a line squared, you need to be familiar with the gradient symbol (also used for curl or rotor), which is nabla or del (the triangle with its tip down). The gradient squared is the Laplace operator, which is denoted by the delta sign (the triangle pointing up).

And now that we're talking math, here the circle is considered to have zero edges (as opposed to an infinite number).

Appendix D: The Map Adventure

This assumes that you have a map that you want the players to familiarize themselves with. For obvious reasons, this works best with a real map that the players can pore over, so consult Appendix A first.

There are two versions of this adventure: The traveling version and the trivia version. You can combine them as you see fit.

The traveling version is rather simple. First you think of a reason for someone to travel to, say, six different places on the map. This could be to deliver summons to a clandestine meeting, gather ingredients for a mystic potion, collect the six keys to open the gate to a dungeon. Then you whip up a random encounters table, perhaps including someone actively trying to stop the project.

Now all you have to do is to name six locations, and the characters will then have to study the map in order to find them and plan the best way to get around. Then off they go. The only real drawback is that it can get a bit repetitive.

The trivia version does not have to include actual travel, only looking at the map. Say, the local lord will only hire the party if they know the land, and so they must pass a test first. In the map of Hardnit below, every shire has a main town from which the shire is governed. So the characters must name the shire given the name of the town. Or it could be to answer questions like "If you travel north from Safyr, what town do you arrive at?" Alternatively, the party could be helping a sage decipher a diary. "I arrived at - something illegible - it starts with a G... - what could it be?" and so on. If you like a more mystical approach, you can use anagrams, riddles, and classic treasure map directions. A location could be where to lines intersect (needing two pairs of known sites). Again, the Fallen Phrases could be used to make a rhyme. I made a series of adventures, where the party needed to identify the location and travel there, kill a monster, and then get the next clue.

The whole idea is to make the players invest a lot of energy getting to know your world. Once they've familiarized themselves with it, it'll be easier for them to interact with. For example, in Hardnit, hobbits are a relatively rare sight. With few exceptions, hobbits are either adventurers or residents of Thimble, a halfling settlement in Rumios. So if the party encounters a hobbit dressed as a farmer, they'll have a good guess as to where he's from.



Appendix E: An Example of Creating and Converting Einstein Puzzles

As explained above, this can be used in a "Haunted Study"-situation, but I'm sure you can find other applications.

Obviously, you need a campaign-related idea in order to get the puzzle started. It doesn't have to be original, but it needs to contain up to five "subjects", each of which must have up to four "traits". Usually, one of the traits must be a number. So for example, you could have five towns. The first trait would always be the name, and you can choose two more from either the name of the town's largest inn, the name of the mayor or sheriff, what they're known for, what god they worship, or the color/shape/building material of their temple. Then you need a number. This could be the population, the year the town was founded, the distance from a landmark, or their rank in the national sheep herding competition. In my example I'll use a 4x5 grid, but you may want to start out smaller to see how it works. It's possible to go up to 4x7 (7 subjects with 4 traits). You can also choose the difficulty level. Again, I'd suggest starting with Easy and proceeding from there.

So I have prepared my 4x5 table: Dead regents of Bandagora, their traits being Name, Country, Cause of Death, Year of Death.

Celimesh I	Penboyn	Old age	346
Casimir IV	Salakand	Battle	939
Oktavio II	Pellan Empire	Poisoned	878
Milatis VI	Pandese Empire	Died in a duel	1099
Ekla	Ontanien	Burned alive	482

Now I'm ready to go to

<http://www.logic-puzzles.org/>

I'm obviously a big fan of the site. One of the reasons is that it's free. However, that means you can't go back, so you need to take screenshots. One of the problem as it is initially presented, and one of the solved version. If you're not in the mood for actually solving the puzzle yourself, simply keep pressing "Hint" below the puzzle, or click randomly in the grid (either once or twice) and then press "Clear Errors". Remember to take the second screenshot once you've filled out the grid and cleared any errors. If you hit "Submit Solution", then it's all gone.

		names					categories				countries					
		Betty Brewer	Deb Daniels	Ida Ingram	Norma Nolan	Tara Tate	bioengineering	chemistry	economics	medicine	physics	Canada	Germany	Ireland	France	New Zealand
years	1964															
	1968															
	1972															
	1976															
	1980															
countries	Canada															
	Germany															
	Ireland															
	France															
	New Zealand															
categories	bioengineering															
	chemistry															
	economics															
	medicine															
	physics															

Clues	Notes	Answers
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Active Clues

1. Of the person from New Zealand and the winner who won the prize in physics, one is Tara Tate and the other won in 1964.
2. The person from Canada won her prize 4 years before Deb Daniels.
3. The winner who won the prize in bioengineering won her prize 8 years after the person from Canada.
4. Ida Ingram isn't from Germany.
5. The winner who won the prize in economics is either the person who won in 1968 or Ida Ingram.
6. Norma Nolan won the prize in bioengineering.
7. The winner from Germany won the prize in chemistry.
8. Of Deb Daniels and the winner who won in 1976, one is from France and the other won the prize in chemistry.
9. Ida Ingram won her prize after the winner from Ireland.

Backstory And Goal

Screenshot of initial version.

		names					categories				countries					
		Betty Brewer	Deb Daniels	Ida Ingram	Norma Nolan	Tara Tate	bioengineering	chemistry	economics	medicine	physics	Canada	Germany	Ireland	France	New Zealand
years	1964	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	●	●	×	×	×	×
	1968	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×
	1972	×	×	×	●	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	●	×	×
	1976	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	●	×
	1980	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	●
countries	Canada	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×
	Germany	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	Ireland	×	×	×	●	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	France	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	New Zealand	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×
categories	bioengineering	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	chemistry	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	economics	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	medicine	×	×	×	×	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	physics	●	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

Clues	Notes	Answers
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Answers

This grid will auto-populate with all the true relationships you've created on the top 5 rows on the grid. Once this table is fully populated you will be able to submit your solution.

Years	Names	Categories	Countries
1964	Betty Brewer	physics	Canada
1968	Deb Daniels	chemistry	Germany
1972	Norma Nolan	bioengineering	Ireland
1976	Ida Ingram	economics	France
1980	Tara Tate	medicine	New Zealand

Submit Solution

Backstory And Goal

Jamie's homework assignment requires her to write a short biography of several female Schnobel Prize winners. Help her match each Schnobelist to her prize category, country of origin and the year in which she won her prize.

Screenshot of solved version with "Submit Solution" flashing.

The next thing is to convert the traits. In the example, already three traits are the same type: Name, Country, and Year. So it's natural to keep those, especially since the clues will then have the same form. When matching subjects, use the number trait as key, so that the numbers are in order.

Celimesh I Betty Brewer	Penboyn Canada	Old age physics	346 1964
Casimir IV Ida Ingram	Salakand France	Battle economics	939 1976
Oktavio II Norma Nolan	Pellan Empire Ireland	Poisoned bioengineering	878 1972
Milatis VI Tara Tate	Pandese Empire New Zealand	Died in a duel medicine	1099 1980
Ekla Deb Daniels	Ontanien Germany	Burned alive chemistry	482 1968

There is a slight problem here, the dates in the original puzzles are four years apart, while the fantasy dates are from the setting history, and I can't change those. Now 4 years means one space, whereas 8 years means two spaces. So I'm going to fudge that, making 4 years into "less than two centuries", and 8 years into "more than two centuries". It's not an exact match, especially not the last one, but it should be close enough.

Here are the "translated" clues:

1. Of the Pandese Emperor and the regent who died from old age, one is Milatis VI and the other died in 346.
2. The Penboynian king died less than two centuries before Ekla.
3. The regent who was poisoned died more than two centuries after the Penboynian king.

4. Casimir IV wasn't Ontanian.
5. The regent who died in battle either died in 482 or is Casimir IV.
6. Oktavio II was poisoned.
7. The Ontanian king was burned alive.
8. Of Ekla and the regent who died in 939, one is from Salakand and the other was burned alive.
9. Casimir IV died after the Pellan Emperor.

Note that the "pure" Einstein puzzle works best as something the individual players solve at home. If used in a gaming session, leave out some (or all) the clues for the characters to discover. It can be as simple as an ability roll (e.g.: intelligence for research in the library, charisma for persuading someone who knows), or it could be role-playing, or hunting through the ruins of an old haunted castle for clues. Also feel free to break the rules and let the party learn more than just clues. In the example above, the character could find a statue of Casimir IV, inscribed with "King of Salakand 923-939, died in the Kangrisorn Wars at the Second Battle of Duneval".