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Rules Compendium: An Essential Dungeons & Dragons Compendium



Synopsis

A quick and handy rules reference and guide for the Dungeons & Dragons® Fantasy Roleplaying Game. This handy and comprehensive Dungeons & Dragons book is intended as a quick rules reference. It contains the complete core rules for the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons Fantasy Roleplaying Game. In addition to providing an overview of the game and how it's played, this book presents the core rules in a format that is easily referenced during a game. It includes information on level advancement, combat, experience points, treasure, skills, equipment, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I picked this up for one primary reason: to have all the up-to-date rules for the D&D 4 game in one easy to reference guide. This book is part of the Essentials line of D&D 4 products which is meant to bring in new players, (despite what a lot of naysayers are grumbling about this is *NOT* version 4.5). The book is softcover and full color but it is mostly print in single column 10pt (or 11pt) font. It is easy to read and has an excellent index, glossary & exhaustive Table of Content. All in all this book lives up to its claim--a one stop book to reference rules during gaming and to have all the core rules in one place. Do I still plan on using my PHB 1, 2 & 3 as well as my DMG 1 & 2? Yes. Does this book replace the 4e hardcovers? No. While it is part of the Essentials line it is not a replacement of the D&D 4 hardcovers (in fact Wizards reported that there are enough hardcovers in-print that they don't need to print more. They also reported that once Essentials is over they will go back to re-printing the hardcovers). The book is divided into Introduction (examples of in-game sessions);

The Basics (how to play & the actual core mechanics of 4e); Adventures & Monsters (how to build them and create games); Understanding Powers (what these are and keyword definitions); Skills; Exploration & Environment (including resting and diseases); Combat (the largest section-all the errated/up-to-date combat rules); Equipment and 3 Appendices: Rewards, Terrain Features, Glossary and Index. I predict this little book will soon be the most visible book around my gaming table and around all gaming tables in cons/competitions and RPGA events. In fact, I may pick up a second one just because it is probably going to get a lot of mileage and wear. No longer will I have to lug around 4 or more hardcover books to a friend's place for a day of D&D and even more so to Cons. Wizards has produced an excellent rules compendium (in every sense of what that word means) for the next generation of D&D.

Out of all the Essentials products I planned to buy, this was the one I was least excited about. I mean, when it comes down to it, it's a book full of rules - rules that, by and large, I already know. That's not nearly as enticing as a book full of new options for players - or even a book full of new takes on old monsters. Well, after some reading, I'm impressed, and I'm glad I grabbed it. Most everything is here, in one source, spelled out, diagrammed, and organized. I never need to remember where I found the rules for drowning, what the heck happens in mounted combat, or what the errata is for flying creatures who can hover. There are explanatory sections for a lot of different items, like explaining what each of the various Conditions might represent, and overall the approach is very friendly. Really, it's about the simplest and most user-friendly collection of the 4e rules it could be. What's not here? Well, while Rituals get a brief mention, I really, really wish the rules for Arcane Familiars and Ranger Beast Companions were in here. Those are fiddly and kind of obscure, and would frankly be the perfect sorts of details to include in a useful compendium. Picking up Arcane Power every time I need to know about active vs. passive familiars is kind of a bear, and I'd rather leave character splatbooks like that on my shelf. It's this sort of thing which led me to give the book four stars instead of five. Like the other Essentials books, it's digest-sized and heavier than it looks. Mine got a bit beaten up in the mail, which is unfortunate, but otherwise it seems pretty sturdy. Still, I might decide to visit my FLGS for the upcoming softcovers rather than have them shipped in a flimsy envelope. I'm very happy I bought this, and consider it an excellent value for my money. It has a few warts, but it's still impressive.

I bought the Rules Compendium based on what other reviewers have said, and I am not disappointed. As others have pointed out, this book is smaller, lighter, and hence more portable.

The 'smaller' format has certainly benefited the writers' style as well. There were several points in the original 4e PHB that I had to re-read over and over to get what was going on, but in this book you can tell how much care went into making the rules clearer and more concise. I, for one, would not be disappointed if these Wizards went with this format in the future. I've gotta confess, I was a bit surprised to find this book was edited and organized as a stand-alone piece of work. All too often, what you get with the usual 'compendium' style of errata and updates, is just an anthology-style reprint of previous articles, FAQs, and assorted blurbs that have been published here and there. That style is fine, but what happens with the 'anthology' what you get is just one more book of references-- pretty much an extended collection of appendices and 'by-the-ways.' You still need the original rulebook, and even then you're stuck flipping back and forth between volumes, checking one against the other to find which rules are the most current. Now, I like my hardcovers, they look good on my shelf; but for the player trying to run an up-to-date game, this is cumbersome, not to mention all those books get heavy. But with this book, all the new bits are woven in with the old, and it's all right there, 319 pages' worth, in on place. This Rules Compendium is organized like a regular rulebook, so all need to do is crack it open and get going... in fact, for all the basis in running the game, you could probably get away with using this one book... not bad for the price. Definitely handy guide and a worthy purchase. [Regarding changes to rules: The most notable change is that Rituals don't appear anywhere in the book. I don't know if that means they're being written out of the game, or if they'll pop up again, possibly in a revamped form. Personally, I think they're neat, but if they're gone, I don't miss 'em.]

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