

# Knights of the Dinner Table Submission Guidelines

So you want to submit an article to *Knights of the Dinner Table*, eh? That's great, because we're always looking for new material to cram between the covers of each issue. The door is wide open - we accept articles on any game system or game-related topic of interest to Joe and Jane Gamer. Following these simple guidelines is no guarantee that we'll publish your work, but it is the best way to hedge your bet and see your name in print.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

We accept for consideration articles on any game system or product, articles pertaining to any game-related topic, game rules or mechanics, and anything of interest to the general game-playing community. Please use common sense and courtesy when writing your submission. Since *Knights of the Dinner Table* readers are of all ages and backgrounds, please do not include any questionable or offensive material. Your article must represent your own work, and not infringe upon the work of others. We accept submissions of all lengths, but reserve the right to edit your work for space and other concerns. Please include, along with the submission, the following information:

1. Your pen name as you wish it to appear in the magazine;
2. Your legal name and mailing address where we can send payment and a complimentary copy of the issue in which your submission appears;
3. Any other necessary payment information;
4. The name of the game(s) or game system(s) that you've written the article for (or the genre type, for generic articles);
5. A description of who the article applies to, i.e. GameMasters, players, everyone, etc.;
6. Credits including all contributors; and
7. A Submission Release form and/or an Assignment of Rights form.

If your submission uses or references rules from a published game, be sure that the game information included in the submission is correct. Also be sure to include all the necessary game information including game statistics, quirks/flaws, abilities, equipment, attacks, and any pertinent personality information. Do not reprint material from published works or material that is not your own original work.

All submissions printed in KoDT become the property of Kenzer and Company. Kenzer and Company is under no obligation to publish any work. All article submissions will be paid a standard rate of \$0.03 per word published (excluding letters to the magazine and similar categories as noted below). Payment will be sent, along with a complimentary copy of the issue in which the submission appeared, after we receive the issue from the printer. Payment may take up to four weeks to arrive after the release of the issue.

## SPECIFIC CATEGORY GUIDELINES (be sure to also follow the general guidelines above)

**A Hacker's Guide to...:** If you like to draw maps, this is the feature for you. Send us a map (with key, if needed), along with a 75-100 word background history or description of the area. Your map (including key) must fit within a 6" wide x 7 7/8" tall space, and be easily legible. Submissions should be for HackMaster's Aldrazar, Kingdoms of Kalamar's Tellene, or Aces & Eights' western frontier. Payment rates may vary.

**All Things Magic:** We accept descriptions of any new magical item, weapon, or device for this section. Each item should have all the necessary game information, and a description of its appearance for art purposes. Items may include extraordinary items, not just those that are strictly magical. Submissions for all game systems are welcome. Your article should be between 300-350 words, including game statistics. If the item has unusual features not described in the article, be sure to include a full description so that we can commission artwork.

**Bait and Tackle:** This feature presents a series of brief adventure hooks a GM can take out and use on the fly. They can be useful if the GM finds out he suddenly needs a quick adventure idea. Each hook must be presented in three-part format: Setting, Bait, and Tackle.

**Setting:** a short tag identifying the setting or type of adventure hook. (Examples: city, wilderness, rural, subterranean, any treasure chest, in an empty room, etc.)

**Bait:** The situation or carrot used to lure or 'bait' the players and prod them in the right direction. (Example: The adventurer's have just completed combat with a monster, gaining access to its treasure. A massive oaken chest is part of the haul. It is filled with gold coins, some of which have a large, deep cut on their edges.)

**Tackle:** This is the hammer or twist that makes the situation dangerous exciting or challenging. Without the tackle what's the point? (Example: The coins are old pirate treasure, and have been cursed. Every eighth coin in the hoard has the cut along its edge, and whenever the coins are counted, any counting of one of the edged coins causes eight uncut gold coins to disappear from the hoard.)

Submissions should be generic (not tied to any particular game system), but can be of any genre (fantasy, western, espionage, etc.). Each submission should be brief in nature (200-250 words).

**Board Squawk:** If you've got a review of a board game that's still in print, this is the place for it. Try to briefly discuss previous editions and changes in publishing houses (if any), give a synopsis of how the game plays, what components are included, what makes certain rules (and the game overall) so good, and any complaints or problems. Be sure to include the game's: Name, Number of Players, Designer (if known), and the retail price. A typical submission should be within 750-850 words.

**Casting Call:** This semi-regular feature presents NPCs that come from the lower rungs of life (hirelings, merchants, minor officials, city guards, etc). Characters the party is likely to deal with on a one-to-one basis during their daily travels, so the GameMaster can simply drop the NPC into his campaign. Submissions must consist of one such NPC with the appropriate game statistics and background story. Articles are usually 600-750 words, including game statistics. Submissions for all game systems are welcome.

**Close Encounters of the Random Kind:** If you've got a fun and exciting random encounter chart/table you want to share with the rest of world, we can use it here. Please keep in mind that, due to space limitations, we cannot print giant encounter tables. As a general rule, your chart must fit within a 6" wide x 7.5" tall space, and be easily readable.

**Critical Mass:** This is our independent reader review column. Write a review, fill out the form (at the end of these guidelines), and send it all in. Remember, be as honest and impartial as possible, making a point to inform the reader rather than just praise or complain. Submissions for all games and game systems are welcome, and should be between 750 to 800 words.

**Deadly Trappings:** Invented a special trap you enjoy springing on your players and want to see it in print? Deadly Trapping submissions must include: Trap name (such as Marklem's Slimy Golden Death Trap), AKA (trap nickname), Lethality (Low, Moderate, High, Certain), Intent (Entrapment, Injury, Humiliation, Transport, Liquification, etc.), Mechanism (Pressure Plate, Trigger, Hydraulics, Rope Release, Weakened Floor, etc.), and Suggested Damage (2d8 fire damage, 1d6 acid damage, turn to slime in 1d4 rounds, per system rules for crushing damage, etc.) Include a simple sketch showing how the trap works so we can commission art. Submissions should be around 300 to 350 words.

**GameMasters' Workshop:** This category covers all general submissions that would be of interest primarily to GameMasters. This includes articles specific to any game system, as well as articles of a general nature. Submissions for all game systems are welcome. Submissions for all games and game systems are welcome. Minimum article length 600 words (no maximum).

**Game Mechanic:** Have a house rule for your favorite game? This is the perfect place to share it with the world. Any rule is welcomed, and there is no limit to the number of rules or games. Submissions for all game systems are welcome. Keep article length between 800 and 1,000 words.

**Gamer's Pulpit:** We occasionally run guest editorials, written by gamers who feel strongly about a particular topic. Typical word count 700 to 800 words.

**Good, Bad, and Ugly (GBU):** Submissions for this section must consist of three NPCs, each with the appropriate game statistics and background story (the story should connect all three). They must include one "good" NPC, one "bad" NPC and one "ugly" NPC. How you choose to interpret those words is up to you, but you need to indicate in your submission which NPC is the good one, the bad one, and the ugly one. You should also include a physical description of each, so we can commission art. Submissions for all game systems are welcome. Each NPC should be between 500-600 words, including game statistics.

#### **Homebrew Art**

Homebrewed, un-commissioned 'filler' artwork is not paid for but, if published, the artist will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which the artwork is published.

**Lost Game Safari:** This popular feature presents reviews of out-of-print games that are worthy of a second look. Be sure to include the game's: Name, Type (board, card, miniature, role-playing, etc.), Number of Players, Designer (if known), Date Published, Frequency (common, uncommon, or rare), and the Going Rate for a Copy (the average online or game store prices). Articles should be approximately 600-700 words, or 1,300-1,400 words if you're verbose.

**Off the Shelf:** For this feature, write a review of a book that you believe will be of interest to many gamers. The book could fall into one of many genres (although these are typically fantasy or science fiction novels, you need not limit yourself to those). Be as honest and impartial as possible, making a point to inform the reader rather than just praise. Be sure to include your thoughts on how this book could provide ideas and inspiration for role-players, with specific examples. For example, the book might mention a cool magic item, discuss a new aspect of alien life, provide specific adventure hooks, and so on. Submissions should be approximately 450-500 words long. Be sure to include the name of the book and its author, and please let us know if you can point us to a good cover image of the book.

**Players' Advantage:** This section covers all general articles that appeal primarily to players. They can be general articles or game specific. Submissions for all game systems are welcome, as long as it is indicated in the article. Minimum article length 600 words (no maximum).

**Rustlers of the Night:** New monsters or creatures should include all the necessary game information, a reference to the game system(s) it is designed for, and a physical description to help us commission artwork. Be sure to separate the game statistics from the descriptive text so that we may format the submission easily. Submissions for all game systems are welcome, and should be about 650-750 words, including game statistics.

**Under the Hood:** This section is for the designer notes and behind the scenes history of published games, and is open to any professional game designer or publisher. Talk about how you designed your game, letting us look behind the scenes of its history, and at the how and why of rules creation. Minimum article length 600 words (no maximum).

**Other Articles:** This category covers all submissions that do not fit into one of the previous categories. Any material that you believe would be of interest to gamers is acceptable.

## FAN CATEGORY GUIDELINES

These categories include letters, stories and other details you just want to share. You can send letters to [mailbag@kenzerco.com](mailto:mailbag@kenzerco.com) or just pop over to [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com) and visit the appropriate forum for each category. Note that all these are unpaid submission categories and do not require a release form. All entries become the property of Kenzer and Company.

### Back Room at the Games Pit

This is a sounding board where gamers can give their two cents worth on whatever seems to rile them. Leave your thin skin at the door, but bring your opinions with you.

### Brian's Picks

In this feature, we review games that we like. This feature is not currently open to freelancer submissions, but if you've got a game you'd like to see featured, you can ask the manufacturer/publisher to send us a copy. (We can't review it if we don't have it!) If we don't like it, sorry, it won't appear in Brian's Picks.

### Face Off!

This semi-regular feature comes from our Face Off! discussion forums at [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com), where each month we instigate a question and then step out of harm's way. Face Off! articles reprint well-written, insightful or just plain funny views and opinions of our readers, on both sides of the discussion. Visit our Face Off! forum to see the latest question.

### FLGS (Friendly Local Game Store)

If you've got a great local game store you want to share with the rest of world, we can use it here. Be sure to include the store's name, address, and the days/times the store is open. A phone number, public email address, or webpage are also helpful. Please send some pictures that we can run with your article, such as the outside and/or inside of the store. If you include a picture of the game store staff, please be sure we know who's who. (Note that we may not be able to print all the pictures.) Photos should be sent as 300 dpi JPEG or TIFF files. Submissions should be between 100 to 300 words.

### Game Vine

You can send us newsworthy items, rumors, press releases, announcements, and so on, for publication in this feature.

### KODT Strip Ideas

We also welcome any ideas, anecdotes, experiences, or stories that you think might make a good **Knights of the Dinner Table** strip. Strip ideas need not be scripted or complete. Sometimes a good idea or punchline is just as good as a fully fleshed-out strip. If your idea is used, you will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which your strip appeared.

### Table Talk

This category is for letters to the editor. You can send letters to [mailbag@kenzerco.com](mailto:mailbag@kenzerco.com) or just pop over to [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com) and visit our Table Talk forum.

### Tales from the Table

Tell us about a special character or event that happened in one of your games. We accept stories about any and all game systems. While being published is not guaranteed, those who write shorter tales have a better chance, due to space limitations.

## SUBMITTING NEW ARTICLES

Proposals for new articles should be sent electronically to [proposal@kenzerco.com](mailto:proposal@kenzerco.com). The subject line should read: YOUR NAME HERE, ARTICLE CATEGORY submission (for example: Barbara Blackburn, Rustlers of the Night submission).

**Format:** Text files should be attached as a Microsoft Word (.doc), rich text (.rtf) or plain text (.txt) file, without art or special document formatting. Be sure to include your name and all contact information in the body of your email AND in your document, since cover letters and emails can get separated from the document, leaving them in limbo.

**Artwork:** If you have artwork that you would like to accompany your article, send it separately in .jpg or .tif format at actual size and at least 300 dpi resolution. Black and white art should be sent as grayscale rather than full color. If you are submitting art with your article, include the artist's signed release form for publication along with your own.

**Release Form for Publication (following page):** The Assignment of Rights form or simply 'AoR,' is a very important form. We MUST have a filled out copy of your AoR form at the completion of each article. Without the AoR, we cannot pay you for your work, or even publish it in our product. If we do not receive the AoR form, your work will be pulled from the book, and we cannot pay you. This also means that we may have to have another author fill in at the last minute. This is an easy way to be dropped from the active roster.

Since you'll need to send an AoR form with each article, be sure to keep a blank master copy of the form for any future articles you have planned. We cannot have a standing form for future submissions - the law doesn't work that way. We need the forms after the article is written and before we print it.

We realize that some freelancers want to keep the rights to their work, but we just don't have the resources to handle different contracts for every KoDT submission, so if you don't want to release the rights to your article – don't submit the article. If you have an idea for a large project or series of articles that you want to keep the rights to, contact us first to see if we're interested in working with you on that, before you take the time to write and polish it all.

The "Project" line is where you fill in the title, such as "Rustler of the Night: Giant Sprout" or whatever. Since we need a completed Assignment of Rights form for every article, when you send in your AoR form, please include a reference/article title in this Project line. It makes it much easier for us to locate a form if you label the Project line as, for example, "GBU: Izhvan, Arvenger, Voltox" instead of simply "GBU" or just "Good, Bad, and Ugly article" - especially if you have multiple articles in the same category.

If you want a single AoR to cover a batch of multiple submissions, simply fill in the Project line in with something like "batch of Rustlers of the Night articles" or as appropriate, and write the individual articles titles along the top, bottom, and/or sides of the form.

The "State" and "County" lines at the bottom of the sheet are for YOUR state and county, not ours. Be sure to print and sign your name by hand – do not type it in!

The completed form can be faxed, mailed, or even scanned (100 to 300 dpi; PDF, JPG, or PSD) and emailed along with your article.

KODT Submissions    511 W Greenwood Avenue    Waukegan, IL 60087  
847-662-6600 (phone)                      847-680-8950 (fax)

Remember that the most important guideline is that you enjoy writing, sharing, and reading your article! Good luck!

**Assignment of Rights**

The following should be printed, filled out and signed for each Project. Compensation will be triggered by receipt of properly executed Assignment document.

**ASSIGNMENT AND RATIFICATION OF TRANSFER**

1. I, \_\_\_\_\_, an individual residing at \_\_\_\_\_, herein referred to as "Assignor," hereby grant, transfer and assign to Kenzer and Company, an Illinois corporation, with offices at 511 W Greenwood Avenue, Waukegan, IL 60087, its successors and assigns, all right, title and interest in and to all work and materials relating to Assignor's creative work known as Project \_\_\_\_\_ including the copyright, patent, trade secret rights and all other right, title, and interest therein and consisting of all existing written materials relating thereto (collectively the "Works"). This exclusive grant of rights shall include, but is not limited to, the rights to publish, reproduce, transmit, adapt, prepare derivative works, sell or otherwise make use of the Works (including all subsequent additions, revisions, supplements to and versions of the Works, regardless of length or nature) throughout the world, in any form or medium and in any language, and to license or otherwise transfer to others the rights commensurate herewith in connection with the Works, for the entire term of the copyright or patent, including any renewals and extensions.

2. I hereby grant Kenzer and Company, its successors and assigns, the right to file copyright or patent applications in the United States and throughout the world for the Works in the name of Kenzer and Company, its successors and assigns. I hereby agree that Kenzer and Company, its successors and assigns may act as attorney-in-fact to execute any document that Kenzer and Company, its successors and assigns, deem necessary to record this grant with the United States Copyright Office, the United States Patent and Trademark Office or elsewhere. If requested, I agree to execute any and all copyright, patent or trade secret documents requested by Kenzer and Company, its successors and assigns. The cost of recording and registering ownership rights in the Works shall be borne solely by Kenzer and Company, its successors and assigns.

I hereby confirm that this assignment of rights is fully supported by consideration that I receive in the form of salary, royalty payments or other compensation.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ (USA)

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Information

## Critical Mass Game Review Form

Game Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_

Retail Price: \_\_\_\_\_ Category: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Writing: \_\_\_\_\_ Art: \_\_\_\_\_ Overall Production: \_\_\_\_\_

Rules Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_ System/Playability: \_\_\_\_\_

Replay Value: \_\_\_\_\_ Entertainment Value: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend this game to a friend?    Y        N

### Grading Scale:

**5: Excellent** - I am always willing to play this game

**4: Good** - I am usually willing to play this game, and will only object in unusual circumstances.

**3: Average** - I like playing this game regularly, but not too often.

**2: Fair** - I will play this game only occasionally.

**1: Poor** - I avoid playing this game if possible.

**Rating Categories:** Basically, rating each category is a judgement call. Opinions among gamers vary greatly. Put two gamers in a room and toss them a new game - chances are they won't agree on its merits. For some gamers art is not as important as the writing. For others it is equally important. For most gamers it's 'how it plays' that matters above all else.

The Review Ballot box is not meant to replace the good old-fashioned game review. It is meant to supplement the review — to provide an impression-at-a-glance of how other gamers feel about a specific game.

The following are only suggested guidelines for rating each category.

**Writing:** This is a measure of the overall quality of the writing. This could include typos/grammatical errors as well as the author's basic writing skills and his ability to engage the reader and convey his message.

**Art and Illustrations:** Was the quality of the art sufficient for the product? Did it lend itself to the game and its presentation? Did it detract from the overall quality of the game?

**Overall Production:** This would cover the quality of such things as printing, packaging, binding, components etc. Keep in mind that this is relative. A five-dollar El Cheapo game should not be expected to have the same production qualities as a thirty-dollar core-rules book.

**Rules Presentation:** Did the rules adequately explain how to play the game? Were there omissions? Were they confusing or incomplete? Keep in mind that while the game itself may rock, poorly written rules could impede learning and raise the frustration factor.

**System/Playability:** Okay, so you have finally learned the rules and have sat down and actually played the game. This is what everyone wants to know - is it playable? Is the game unbalanced or otherwise flawed?

**Replay Value:** Now that you have played it, is there enough to the game that you would play it again? Is this one of those games that will quickly be banished to the games' closet or will it get played over and over again?

**Entertainment Value:** Was it worth the cost of admission? Forget poorly written rules, bad production qualities, etc. Did the game entertain you and your friends?

**Overall Rating:** This is an average of all your scores above. This is the rating that will be used to stack the game up against all others in its category.

**Play Fair:** We ask that you do not evaluate games or game product which: 1. You haven't taken the time to actually play in the environment they were designed to be played in. (For example: Don't review a set of Live Action Rules if all you did was read the book in the comfort of your favorite easy chair.) 2. The game/product is of a genre and/or gaming-form you dislike by nature. (For example, if you just hate the D&D™ system, please don't evaluate a D&D™ product.)