



Legends of the Shining Jewel

Tips for New Authors

September 2010

1. The points presented here are only to help you avoid some common mistakes. They are not complete and do not replace the **LSJ Author and Editor Guidelines**. Please read the complete **LSJ Author and Editor Guidelines** for the most complete information on crafting your scenario. We know that they may seem a bit long and intimidating, but they contain valuable information that you need to have.
2. Regardless of which version of Word (or compatible freeware document program) that you are using, all submissions must be saved in the Word 97-2003 format. This will help to retain the formatting found in the LSJ Scenario Template and make it easier to turn your event into a PDF.
3. Be sure to use the most current version of the **LSJ Scenario Template**. It is much easier to type into a template that already has the correct formatting than to format a blank Word document. The current version can generally be found at www.theshiningjewel.com and in the files section of the LSJ-Authors Yahooogroup. When in doubt, ask lsj-plots@theshiningjewel.com or your Editor.
4. All creatures, skills, feats, classes, abilities, locations, names and other references **MUST** be either Original, the property of the Legends of the Shining Jewel, or Open Gaming Content. If it is not, you may not use it.

5. Do not rely on spell/grammar check. Spell check will only tell you if the word is **spelled correctly**, not if it is the **correct** word.
6. Read your box text aloud. Does it read easily? Does it make sense? Can you tell what is going on strictly from the box text? Remember, this is the part that the Players hear and the only opportunity for you to convey your vision to them.
7. Have *someone else* read your box text. Does it make sense to them? Can they tell what is going on? It is better if this person is not a regular player in the LSJ Campaign. If they can follow the story, experienced players who are familiar with the campaign setting should have no problem.
8. Box Text should not be used to tell the entire story, with all of the details predetermined. It should be used to convey descriptions and invite the PCs to participate in the Encounter.
9. All creatures except animals use Max hit points plus Con bonus for their first two levels/hit die, then 75% plus Con bonus for each hit die/level from 3rd on.
10. The main NPC opponent in a scenario uses a 25 point Stat Buy, like PCs. Secondary NPCs use a 20 point Stat Buy, like Cohorts. Generic/common NPCs use a 15 point Stat Buy, like Hirelings.
11. An NPC's highest level class is considered to be her Favored Class. Unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary, the Hit Point Option should be used, rather than the Skill Point Option, when calculating the Stat Block.
12. It is important that you not tell a Player how their character feels about a given situation. Each Player, and by extension their character, has their own personality and life experiences and may not react the way that you expect. Instead, tell them what they *perceive*. Descriptions of sights, scents and sounds, as well as the reactions of various NPCs, can be used to convey your scene to the Players and evoke an emotional reaction. A fighter used to blood and guts is going to react differently than a pampered aristocrat in the same situation.
13. Expect the Unexpected. You cannot anticipate every possibility, but if you only provide for the Players to do 'A', they will immediately go out of their way to do 'X', 'Y' or 'Z'.
14. Avoid silliness in your writing. It may be tempting to include an encounter that is based on your favorite joke/song/old gaming story or whatnot, but we try not to get too wild and wooly when it comes to humor, and more so with regard to outright silliness. We DO encourage humor in our modules, but too much destroys the tone of the campaign (as many of us have seen happen in certain other campaigns that will go nameless). Humor is a great thing, but use it sparingly. We take the LSJ

campaign seriously, and we want others to also. Not TOO seriously, but...you get the idea.

15. People do not speak in complete sentences. In the case of dialogue, it is okay to use fragments and phrases.
16. Avoid using NPC names that have already appeared in another event, unless you are using that same NPC. Keep a list of any new NPC names. It is confusing for a player to be in a mod with Harry, Harold, Henry and Hank as the NPC's. Try using a name from each letter of the alphabet before you repeat a letter.
17. If someone is talking, there should be quotation marks at the beginning and end of what they are saying.
18. Make sure you format the skill checks as **Skill Name** (sub-skill) check **DC##**. This is so GM's don't have to hunt for these things.
19. Appearances by your own PC should be limited to a minor cameo role. An author's PC, unless retired, should not be central to the event.
20. PCs belonging to other players may not be used without permission, and should only appear in a minor cameo role.
21. Be careful when using 'Replace All' to make corrections. You may think that you are only changing the description of a magic user, and end up doing 1d4 dawizard instead of damage.
22. Make sure you change the information on the cover page (the first actual page of the module that reflects the author's name and the module name), the Author name on Page 2, and your name on the Open Gaming License Page.
23. When in doubt, ASK. The LSJ Campaign Staff is always available and willing to help make the writing process as easy as possible. It is easier to rewrite a small section than an entire scenario.