Recluse Studio

Rooms That Remember

A Recluse research atlas of narrative, information and page design in twelve classic RPG modules



Revised review edition · 24 October 2026

About this review edition

Rooms That Remember is a Recluse Studio research atlas by Drew Wiberg. Research synthesis, original AI-generated illustrations and production were prepared with Codex. Revised review edition, 24 October 2026.

The atlas brings twelve module studies together with six essays on graphic design and the Morrow Pump, an original adventure setting. The studies follow movement, information and consequence through maps, keyed entries, rumors, illustrations and records used at the table.

The PDF measures 9 × 11.5 inches and includes live text, embedded fonts, bookmarks and source links. The web edition supports continuous reading and search; the Markdown manuscript supplies the editable text.

Citations identify exact sources. A module code followed by d and a number gives a one-based page position in the selected PDF, including covers and inserts. The module register records authors, editions, file assemblies and source links. The design register identifies primary texts and holding-institution records.

Fourteen original illustrations use broken contours, pooled ink and paper gaps. Thirty-four vector diagrams supply routes, grids and labeled relationships. Original design applications appear in the essays and the Morrow Pump worked example.

Module titles and designers’ names identify the works discussed. Rights in the cited works belong to their respective rights holders. The illustrations, diagrams and prose of this atlas were prepared for this edition.

Prepared 24 October 2026 · Private editorial review

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The referee looks down

Someone opens a door in the imagined room. Around the table, everyone waits while the referee looks down, finds a number, reads a paragraph and decides what can be said aloud. That small interruption contains much of an adventure module's design problem. The book has to hold more information than the players possess, make the relevant part recoverable, and release it without exposing the rest of the apparatus.

This atlas studies that apparatus in twelve classic RPG modules. It begins with a page-by-page structural survey and follows the encounter instructions through rumors, movement, withheld knowledge and the physical handling of maps and handouts. The comparisons lead to original design examples, with ink-built figures beside precise drawings of routes, reading fields and information.

The central argument is that narrative design and graphic design meet at the moment of consultation. A number on a plan sends the referee to a passage; a border distinguishes what can be spoken from what must be held back; a separate picture lets the players inspect a shared object while the answer remains elsewhere. These operations shape the order in which a group can know and act, even when the adventure does not prescribe a fixed order of scenes.

Follow one consultation from the map to the encounter key. The referee locates the party, finds the matching number, reads the arrival conditions and checks what an action changes. A misplaced cross-reference can interrupt that sequence at the point when everyone is waiting. A separate display can keep the players looking at the room while the referee checks its mechanism. Page design determines how many of those tasks can happen together.

Title sequences, magazines, catalogs and books offer further ways to organize that attention. The historical design essays examine entry images, grids, changes of scale and the grouping of facts, then apply those operations to adventure design. Each comparison follows a specific piece of work or a designer's account of the problem, with the source beside the proposed application.

Read the atlas straight through for the argument, or enter through a module in the index. A citation such as [B3 d14] identifies the fourteenth page of the selected digital file, counting the cover and inserts. The d prefix distinguishes that position from the number printed on a source page. Foldouts, cropped illustration plates and reconstructed text make the exact digital edition important when locating a passage.

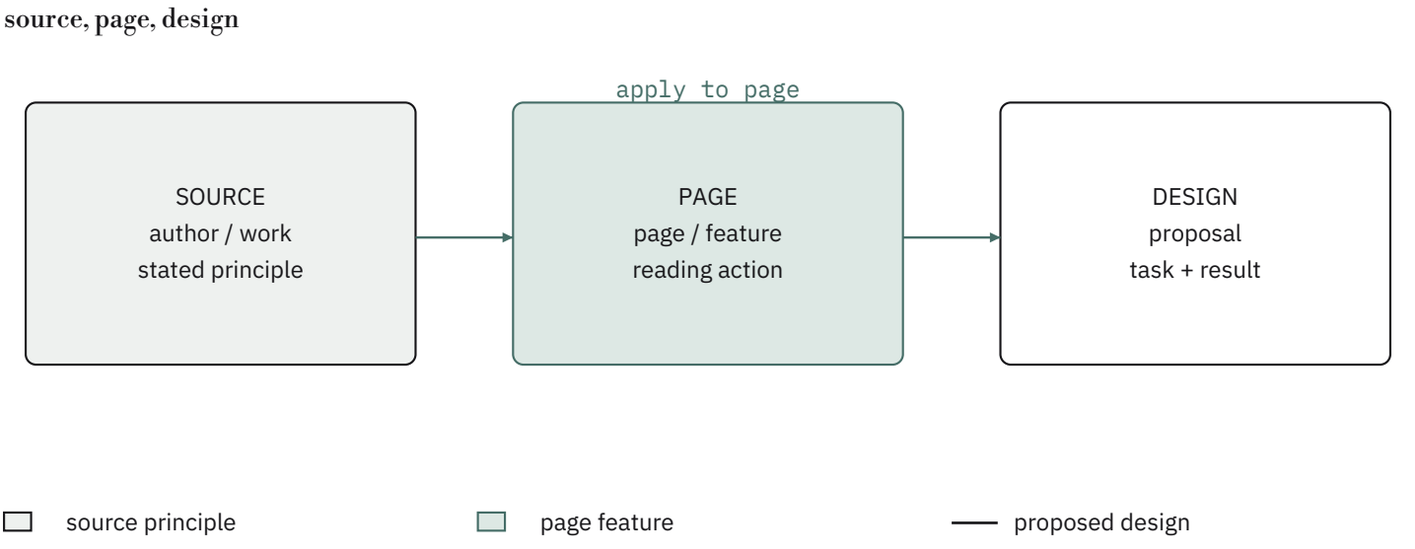
Structural survey: [L pp. 1–8, 19–20]. Module passages are cited in the case studies.

From a source record to a design proposal

Begin with the work and the action it asks of a reader. A designer's essay may explain how related facts should be grouped, while a module page may place an encounter number in a steady lane beside paragraphs of unequal length. The record supplies the designer's account, and the page supplies a visible arrangement. Comparing them brings the reading task into focus: finding one item quickly while retaining its connection to the surrounding information.

A proposed key layout can develop that comparison by holding numbers in one track and allowing descriptions to vary in length beside them. The designer can then check the route from a map location to its entry, watch for a number stranded at a page turn and move an immediate ruling closer to the action that needs it. The principle becomes concrete through these decisions about position and sequence.

The original examples in this atlas give those decisions a place to operate. A well, a service passage and a ferry shed provide locations with information to disclose and conditions that can change. Their schematics reduce each place to the relationships under discussion. A line shows a route, a label gives it an address, and a separate state record carries the change into a later visit.



The three lanes connect a documented design proposition, an observed page arrangement and a new design proposal. Arrows identify the comparison used to develop the proposal.

[L pp. 1–8]. Historical design records are identified individually as [D01] onward.

The selected digital editions

The structural survey contains sixty blank masters, a twenty-page guide and a searchable inventory of 492 digital pages. It records page roles and normalized layout envelopes. Direct readings of the twelve modules add encounter instructions, rumors, allegiances and changes to locations, with digital-page references linking each reading to its source file.

The selected editions include S1's later typesetting, I1's fitted live text and U1's 2001 reconstruction. S3 contains sixty-four individually cropped illustration plates; N1's separated dungeon-map leaves are absent. X1 is the 1983 orange-cover revision. The count below follows these digital assemblies, including covers, inserts and cropped plates. Original physical leaf counts are a separate measure. The module source register gives the edition and file record for each copy.

X1	The Isle of Dread	38
B2	The Keep on the Borderlands	35
B3	Palace of the Silver Princess	36
N1	Against the Cult of the Reptile God	32
S1	Tomb of Horrors	47
S2	White Plume Mountain	20
C1	The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan	44
I1	Dwellers of the Forbidden City	36
T1	The Village of Hommlet	25
U1	The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh	38
C2	The Ghost Tower of Inverness	36
S3	Expedition to the Barrier Peaks	105

Total: 492 digital pages in twelve selected files, counting covers, inserts and individually cropped plates.

[L pp. 2, 19–20]; edition details and file records appear in the module source register.

A chassis that can change locally

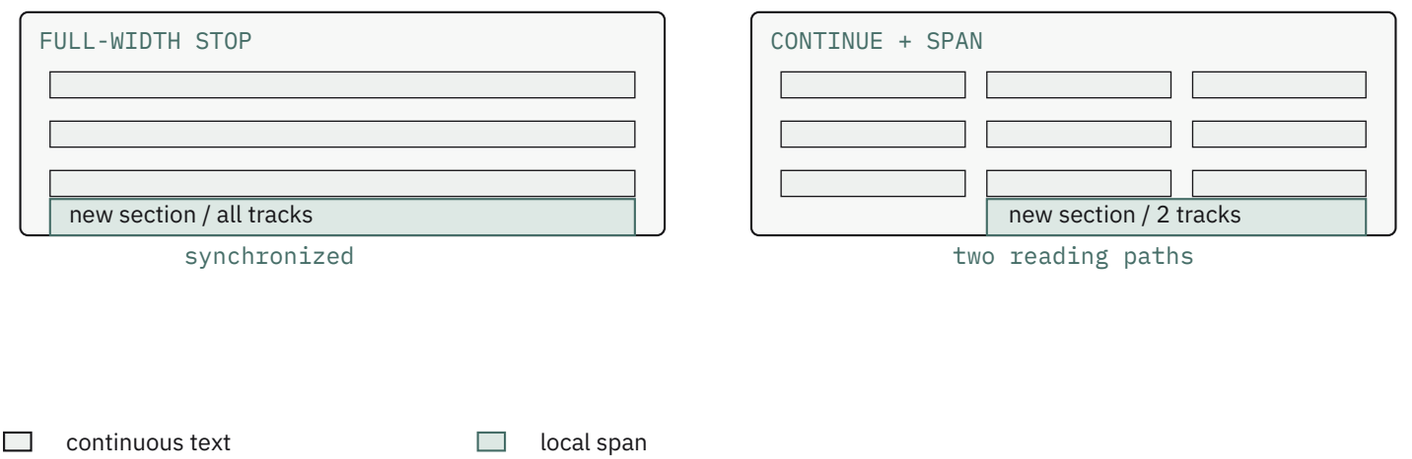
A stable column system lets the referee learn where the next line will be while leaving room for changes in reading width. The archive identifies a two-column baseline in T1, B3, C1, C2 and much of S2 and S3, while the 1983 X1 revision develops a three-column baseline. Each admits tables, drawings and larger spans when the material needs them. The tracks provide a framework within which a region can take on a different job.

Continuous prose needs a dependable reading path; a broad table needs neighboring values to remain comparable; an image needs enough uninterrupted area for the feature being inspected. When one of these units occupies two tracks, the remaining track can continue independently. X1 d29 provides a clear local transition, with an earlier section finishing in one column while a new heading occupies the other two.

The two proposed arrangements below handle a section change differently. In the first, text stops across the whole width. In the second, the right-hand tracks change role while the left continues. The second arrangement can save a page turn, but it also asks the reader to recognize two simultaneous reading paths. A stronger heading and a clear gutter mark where each path continues.

This atlas uses continuous columns for long arguments and broad bands for diagrams whose connections need space, while case studies keep the source reference near the passage it supports. Repeating those arrangements gives the reader a familiar place to look when moving from a module study to a comparison or a worked example.

local change of job



Two proposed page arrangements compare synchronized and independent reading paths. Pale rectangles denote text regions; the gutter separates tracks that continue at different rates.

[L pp. 3–4, 15, 18]; [T1 d4–18]; [C2 d5–13, d26–32]; [X1 d4–13, d22–33, especially d29].

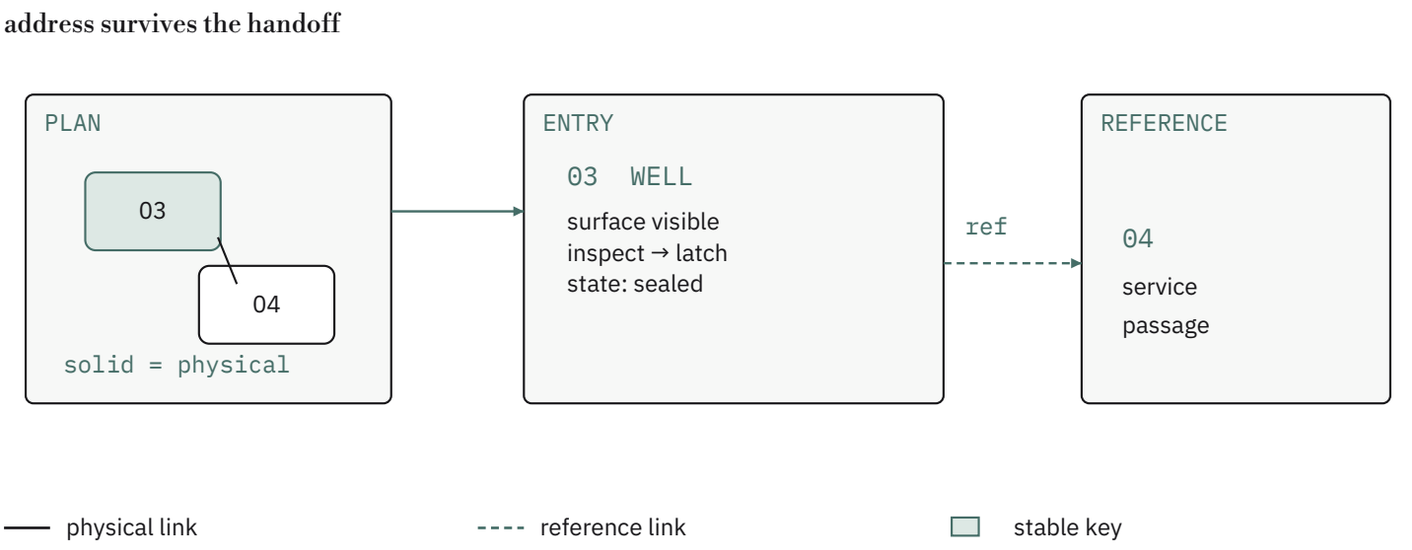
The number is an address

A keyed encounter connects two representations of a place. The map tells the referee where the characters are; the numbered entry supplies conditions, occupants and consequences. The key number is therefore an address that must remain stable while the surrounding prose changes length. Its graphic prominence should serve retrieval. An extravagant numeral that hides the opening line has spent the attention it was meant to save.

The archive's deep hanging-label pattern gives the address its own margin. The apparent white strip beside the text belongs to an entry's indent, and the body runs beneath its own heading. Expanding that indent into a permanent column would turn a compact sequence into a row of larger panels. The number needs enough separation to catch the eye while the description keeps a continuous reading path.

A map key also exposes a distinction between reading order and action order. An editor must print entries in some sequence, but players may reach entry seven before entry three. Each entry needs enough local context to support that arrival. Information required for an immediate ruling should be present or explicitly cross-referenced; information needed only for preparation can live elsewhere, provided the route to it is clear.

In the proposed well and service-passage key, the same address appears in the plan, entry and cross-reference. Trace the route with a finger, then follow it back from the passage to the plan. A missing number or inconsistent label becomes visible before the referee has to resolve it during play.



An original key-to-entry demonstration. Numbers are addresses, solid lines are physical connections, and the thin return arrow is a reference from the entry to another record.

[L pp. 4–5, 10, 18, masters T12 and T56]. Narrative uses of keyed locations are examined in the twelve case studies.

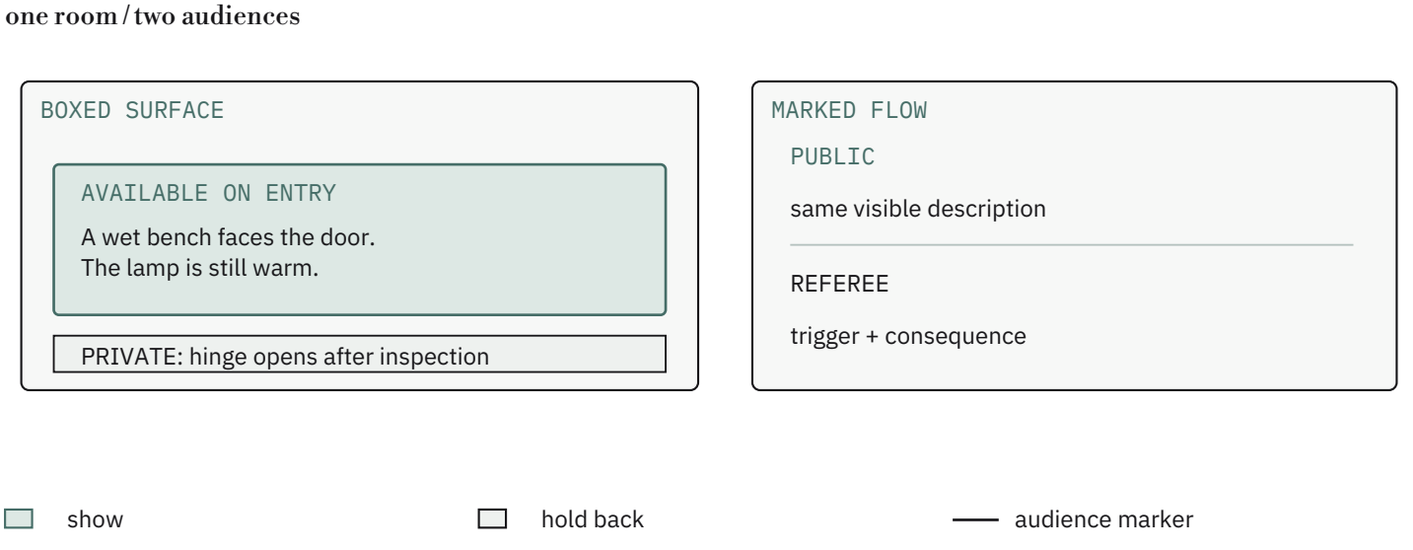
One room, two audiences

The referee and the players may consult the same imagined room through different surfaces. A read-aloud passage describes what a character can presently perceive; surrounding instructions can explain a concealed trigger, an occupant's intention or the effect of a failed action. The border or label marks the point at which the referee changes from presenting the room to administering what happens there.

C1, C2, N1 and U1 use selected bounded reading passages in the surveyed files. B2, T1, I1 and much of S1 and S3 depend more heavily on unboxed flow. Both approaches can separate audiences, but they place different demands on preparation and typographic discrimination. A box makes a physical boundary conspicuous. Unboxed flow depends more on headings, emphasis and the referee's understanding of the passage.

The invented room below carries the same visible description through two proposed arrangements. In the left arrangement, a plain rectangle identifies the words available at entry and a separate paragraph holds the mechanism. In the right, a compact label marks each audience. The rectangle gives the public passage a continuous visible boundary, while labels leave more room for uninterrupted text.

Cover the private material and read the public passage on its own. Then uncover the instructions and find the trigger that releases each hidden fact. The referee needs to distinguish information available on entry from information revealed by close inspection or a particular action, because those moments can occur several exchanges apart.



An invented room in two proposed arrangements. A box or an audience label separates the arrival description from the concealed mechanism.

[L pp. 5, 10]; specific narrative examples: C1, C2, N1 and U1 case studies.

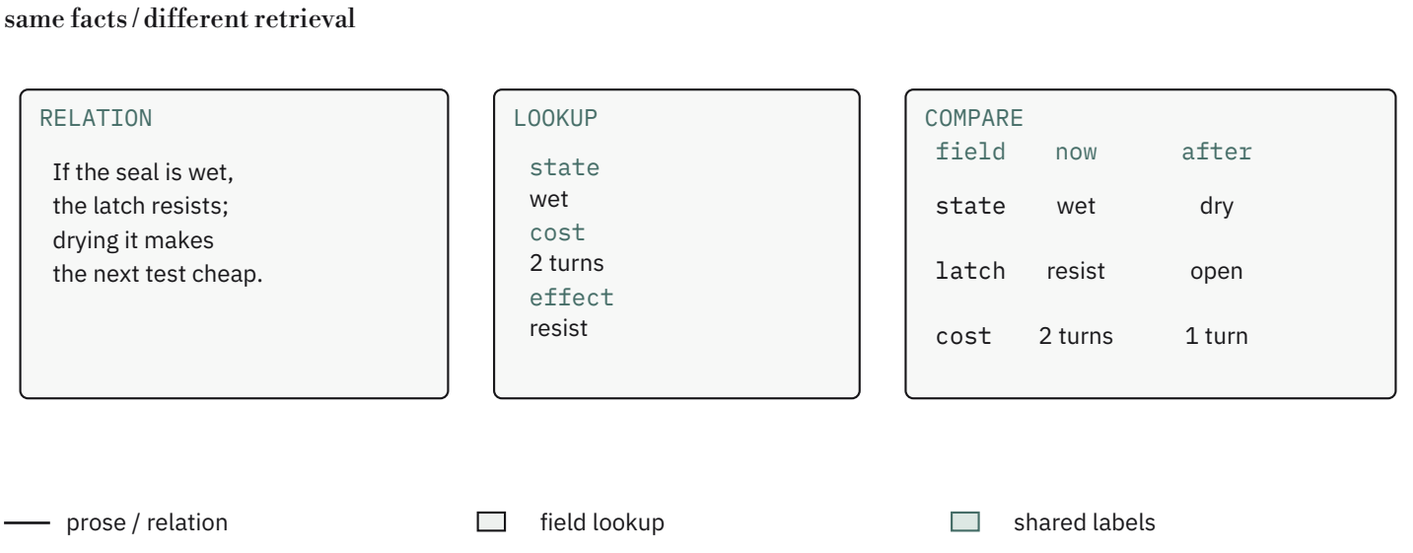
Mechanics need a different reading speed

A paragraph invites the reader to carry a thought through time. A stat record asks for a value that may be needed out of sequence. An equipment roster asks the eye to compare people across shared fields. These are different reading operations, and the corpus gives them several shapes rather than a single card style.

Inline mechanics can keep a short ruling near the encounter that needs it. A vertical label/value list can make repeated attributes easier to locate. A shared label track can compare two related records without printing the field name twice. The fitted-text I1 edition places such a comparison at d27. B3 d34 combines a broad roster with narrow numerical fields and a wider equipment field before shifting to three equipment lists.

The invented records below hold the same facts in three proposed arrangements. Prose preserves a conditional relationship; a list supports retrieval by field; a matrix supports comparison across entities. The choice depends on whether the referee is following a consequence, finding one value or comparing several records during the same decision. Large separate cards would spread that comparison across a wider area.

Place a notes field where a referee will record a change, and keep a trigger close to the consequence it introduces. The distance between these elements affects what the reader must remember while scanning. Dense information can remain readable when related values share a position and the surrounding space separates one operation from the next.



Original non-game records compare prose, list and matrix. The same information changes shape according to whether the reader needs a relationship, one value or a comparison.

[L pp. 5, 11, 16–18]; [I1 d27]; [B3 d28–30, d34]; [B2 d19–20, d34].

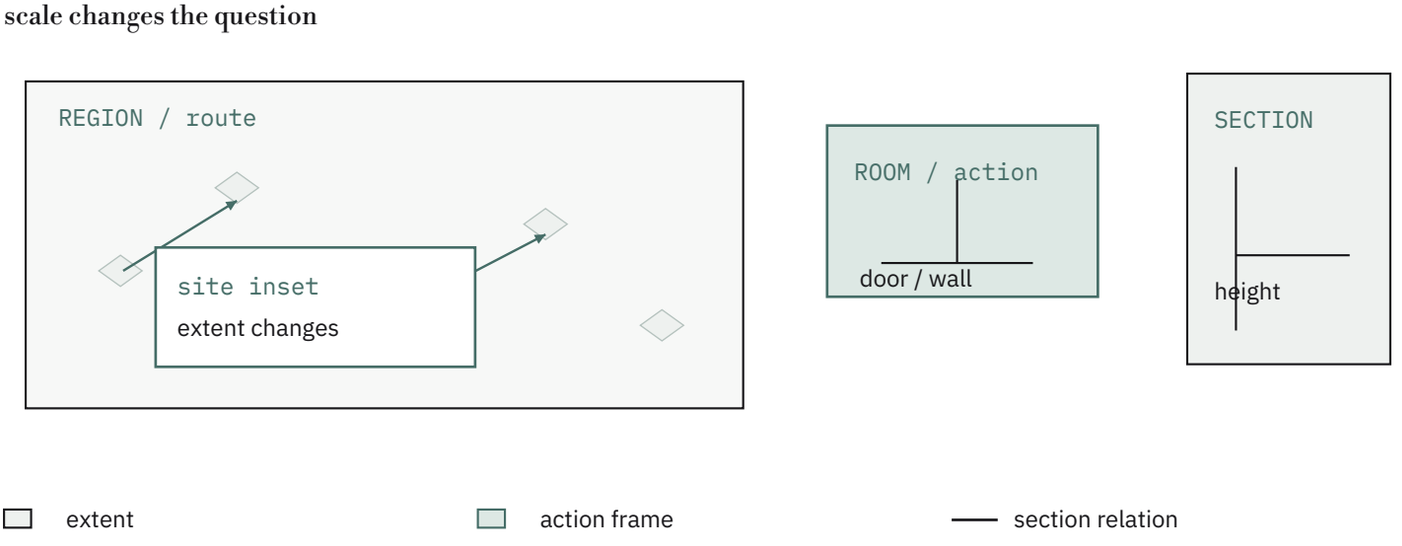
A map changes scale and obligation

A regional hex field and a room plan both describe space, but they ask for different decisions. At the regional scale, a route can consume supplies and reveal a settlement or landmark. At the room scale, a wall, door or vertical separation may decide whether an action is possible. A section view answers a further question that a plan can hide: what lies above, below or across a change in height.

The structural survey separates square fields, hex fields, ungridded regional areas, insets and section strips. Its blank masters retain their relative positions and proportions. The scale model below develops that arrangement into nested views, with one frame for regional travel and another for a particular place, so the change in the reader's task remains visible.

A map inset needs an explicit relationship to its parent. A rectangle inside another rectangle can otherwise be mistaken for an adjoining room. The label, scale and boundary must tell the reader whether the inset enlarges a location, displays a different level or supplies a separate region. The selected files contain several such combinations, including B3's tall map with an upper-side inset, T1's plan and wall-section support, and S3's deck plans with a cross-section.

Physical handling matters as much as geometry. A foldout gives a large field room to remain legible while the booklet stays open to a key. Reducing it to a portrait page changes the size of labels and the distance between routes. A designer preparing a bound edition has to decide whether the map stays beside the encounter text, folds away from it or becomes a separate sheet that can remain on the table.



Proposed nested-scale model. Each frame has its own extent. The small section shows height across the site, while the plan shows connections on one level.

[L pp. 6, 12–13, 17]; [B3 d2, d7]; [T1 d19–24]; [S3 d36–39]; [C1 d43].

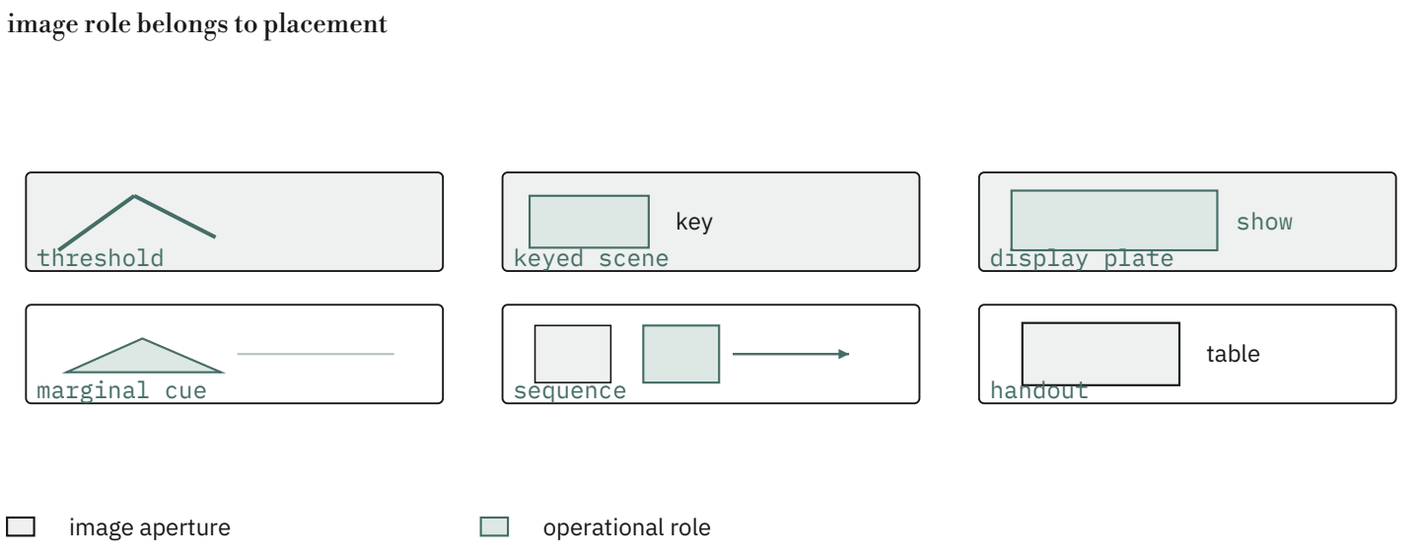
An illustration can hold the question open

An image at a threshold prepares attention before the reader receives an explanation. An image beside a key can specify a visible feature. A player-facing plate lets several people inspect the same scene without receiving the referee's concealed information. A marginal cue can help someone return to a relevant passage. These roles may use similar drawing techniques, but they do different work.

The corpus makes these roles concrete. S1 and S3 have separate display sequences, C1 has paired visual fields, and C2 places visual aids and sideways character sheets within the digital booklet before the ordinary text pagination resumes. The reader changes from following prose to consulting or displaying an image, then returns to the keyed text.

The illustrations in this atlas occupy comparable positions. A bent threshold accompanies the discussion of entry; whispering figures sit beside a clue network; an invented malfunctioning device accompanies the problem of interpretation. Their pooled ink and broken contours give each situation a recognizable form. Routes and labels retain precise edges so the reader can follow the connection through the drawing.

Judge placement by the detail it brings into view. A threshold image can direct attention toward an entrance before the key describes what lies beyond it. A marginal figure can mark a passage that the reader will need again. If a picture conceals the detail discussed in its caption, change the crop, scale or position until the eye can move from the sentence to the relevant mark.



Six image roles, drawn as new page envelopes. A threshold precedes an argument; a keyed scene joins it; a handout changes who can see it. The role belongs to the placement as well as the picture.

[L pp. 7, 13–17]; [S3 d24–25 and display sequence]; [C2 d14–25]; [C1 display sequence].

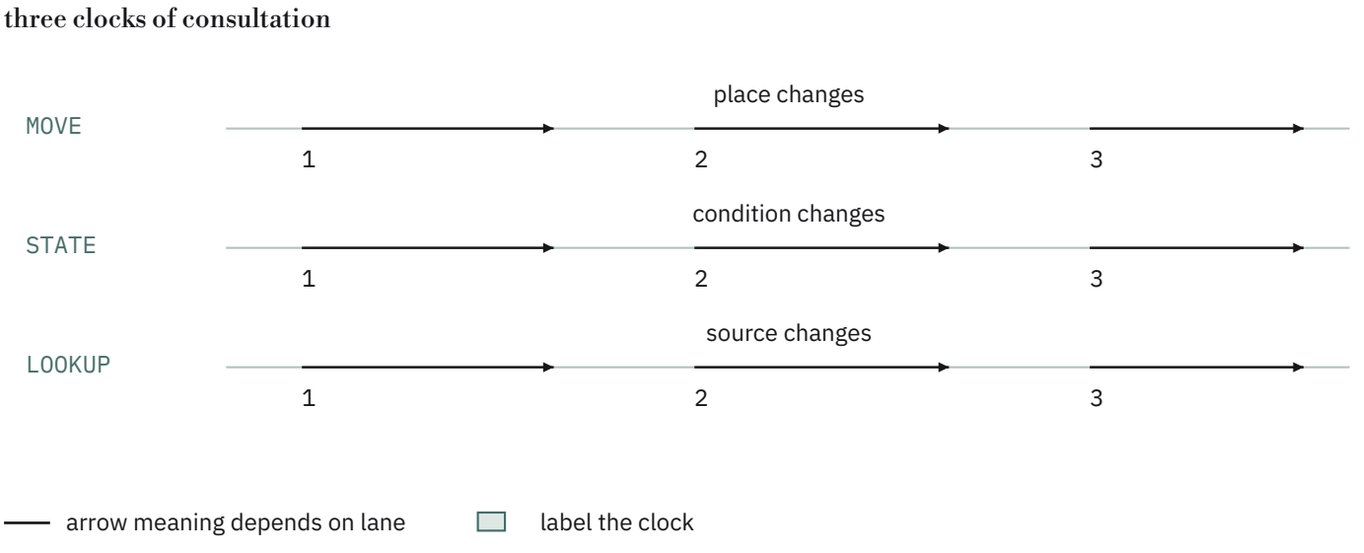
The page stores several kinds of time

An adventure may be printed as a sequence of numbered entries while the table produces a different sequence through movement. The referee reads ahead during preparation, scans sideways during a ruling and returns to an earlier record after a player changes the situation. Narrative time, reading time and lookup time therefore overlap without being identical.

Branching can occur in movement, response or procedure. A map offers several physical routes, an encounter permits several responses, and a referee's procedure can branch according to a die result. A route changes where the party goes; a response changes what happens there; a procedure changes how a rule is resolved. Distinct line styles and labels let a diagram carry these relations together.

The comparison across cases follows these differences. S2 organizes a set of retrieval objectives through spatial alternatives. C1 places pressure on exploration through a constrained situation and hazardous environment. S3 makes the interpretation and use of unfamiliar devices part of the activity. Their pages can all contain numbers and diagrams while supporting distinct kinds of uncertainty.

The proposed schematic below separates a physical path from a conditional action and a consultation step. The referee can retrace the physical path while carrying forward a spent resource or an alerted inhabitant. Distinct arrows keep the route, the changed condition and the return to a written record visible at the same time.



Three arrow meanings in a proposed encounter model. A move changes location; a condition changes state; a lookup directs the reader to another source of information.

Structural basis [L pp. 3–8]; narrative evidence is cited in the S2, C1 and S3 case studies.

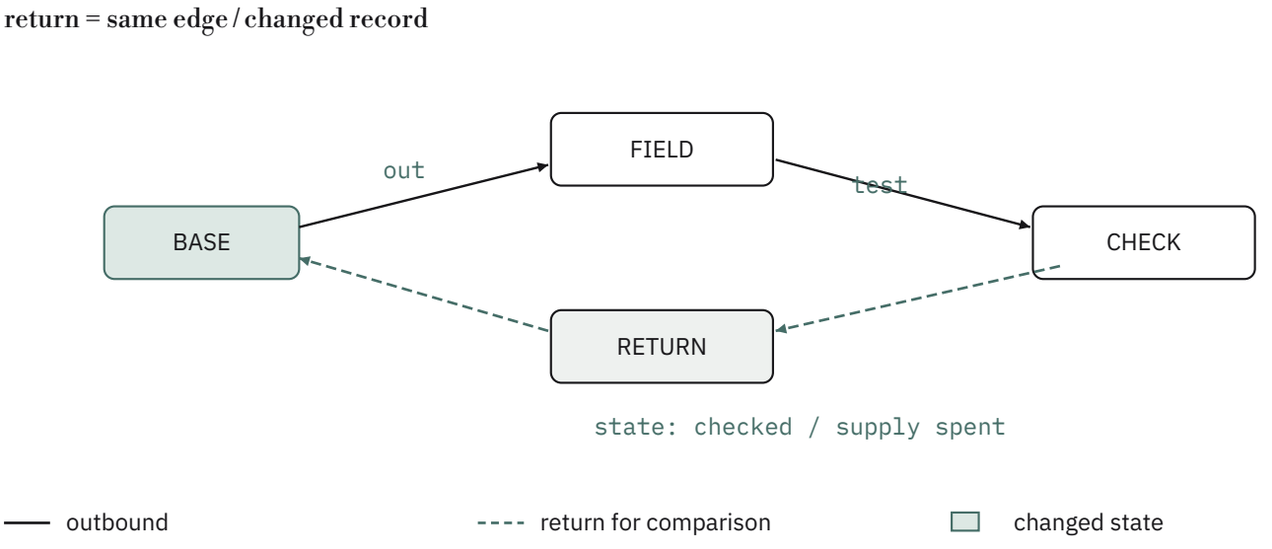
Return changes the value of a place

A return route gives earlier information another use. A landmark that helped the party enter can help them leave; a settlement that supplied a rumor can become a place to test it; a previously safe passage may acquire consequences after an alarm. Encounter instructions and a record of the changed condition connect the first visit to the next.

A hub-and-spoke arrangement connects a base to several expedition sites. The base can also hold concealed factions and dangerous relationships. T1 and N1 place social information within the settlement as well as along routes leading away from it. B2 connects a defended settlement to a nearby field of threats. Returning to the base can therefore bring new information into an existing relationship.

The proposed return network below uses the same edges for the outward and homeward routes. On the second pass, the party brings a changed record: a source has been checked, an entrance exposed or a supply spent. Placing that record beside the location address lets the referee find both the route and its current condition during the next consultation.

Give the return record a trigger and a visible result. If an alarm has alerted the inhabitants, record who moves and which approach they can now watch. If a conversation has settled a rumor, update the speaker's information beside the original entry. The next visit then begins with the consequence of the earlier action already available to the referee.



Proposed return-loop record. The geometry stays constant while the state record changes. Dashed lines retrace the existing route on the return visit.

See the B2, T1 and N1 case studies for direct module evidence. Structural map roles: [L pp. 6, 12–13].

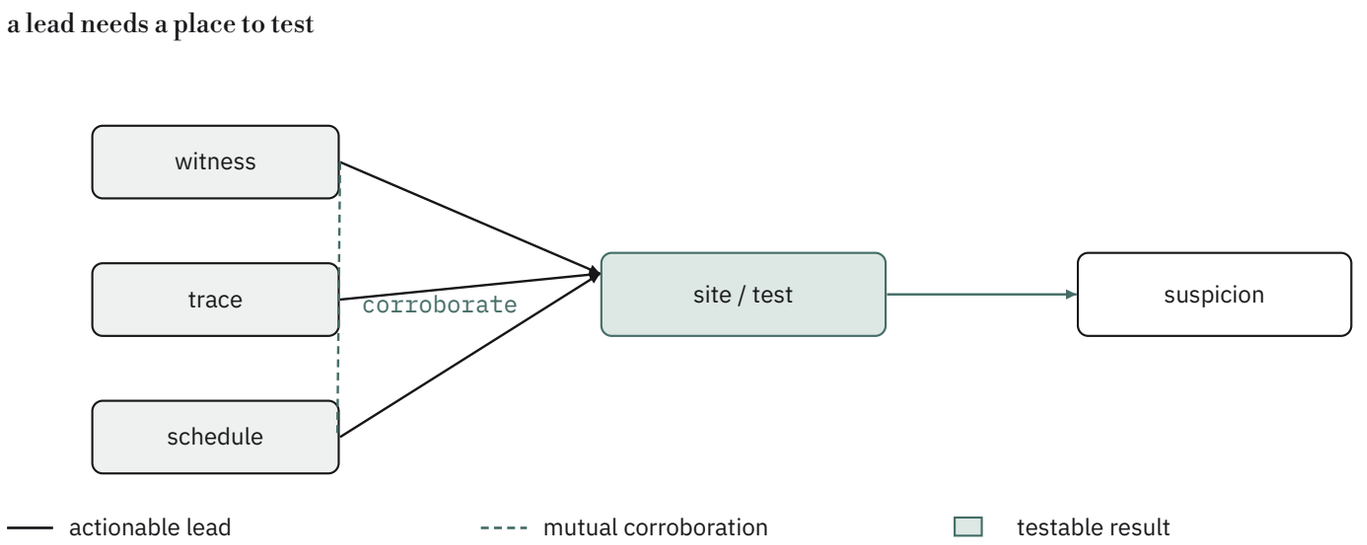
A rumor needs a source and a test

A rumor distributes information unevenly. Someone says something, the party decides how much to trust it, and later evidence may confirm, qualify or contradict it. A rumor table is therefore more than an opening list of hooks. It can create different initial pictures of the same place, especially when a claim is false, partial or tied to a particular speaker.

A clue network connects discoverable evidence to the places and actions it suggests. Record where each clue can be found, what reveals it and where it points. The reader can then follow an investigation through the information available to the party at each stage. A missed location becomes visible as a missing route through the network.

The proposed network below gives three routes to the same practical suspicion. A witness describes a sound, a physical trace suggests recent passage, and a schedule makes the activity possible. The pieces overlap without saying exactly the same thing. If one is missed, the others still give the party something to investigate; finding all three brings the reports into closer agreement.

Information asymmetry becomes playable when the players can act on the difference between what they know and what they suspect. A hidden cause needs an observable effect, a report or an object that invites examination. The referee's record names the action that reveals each piece. N1 and U1 provide examples of concealed social and material arrangements in the case studies that follow.



Proposed three-route clue network. Solid links connect a source to an actionable location. Dotted links join reports that can be compared for corroboration.

Module readings: N1 and U1; B2 for rumors. The diagram proposes three overlapping routes to an investigation.

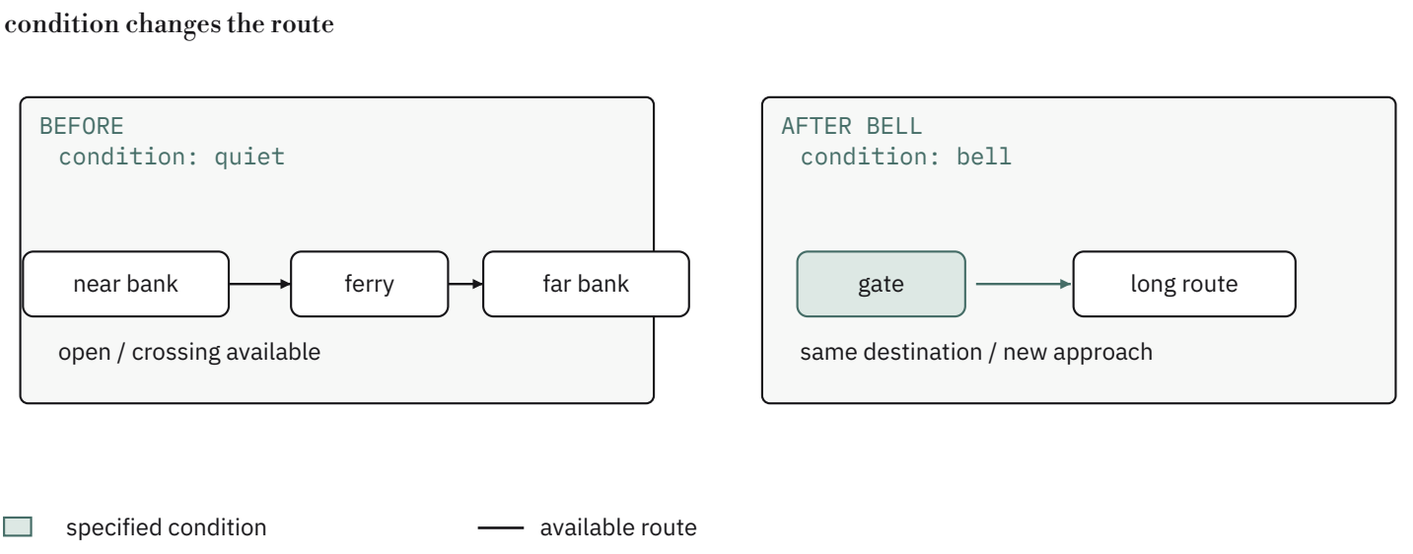
Escalation requires a condition

A threat can become more urgent because time passes, a boundary is crossed, a resource is consumed or an opponent learns something. These mechanisms differ from a sequence of increasingly dangerous rooms. Both can create pressure, but only the first group requires the referee to track a changing state beyond the current room.

Time limits, environmental hazards and alarms require different records. A time limit needs an elapsed interval and an endpoint. A hazard needs the condition that exposes a character to it. An alarm needs the event that alerts someone and the response that follows. These details tell the referee when to consult the rule and which parts of the situation to update.

The proposed ferry example below ties a route change to a bell. Before the bell, the crossing is available; after it, the same destination requires another approach. The record places the event beside its consequence so that the referee can update the route as soon as the bell sounds, including when the party is occupied elsewhere.

After the crossing closes, the party can investigate the closure, seek another route or try to persuade the keeper to reopen it. Each response begins from the same recorded change. An escalation entry therefore needs to remain available alongside the map and the local key, where the referee can consult it while resolving a new plan.



Proposed conditional escalation record. The evening bell closes the crossing; the party must then reopen it or choose another route.

Compare the direct C1, C2, N1 and U1 readings. This ferry example is original to the atlas.

The exceptions carry information

Two-column prose recurs across the surveyed files, alongside three-column pages, empty stocking fields and separate picture packets. These departures correspond to different tasks. A referee fills an encounter field during preparation, follows columns while reading and turns a display toward the players during play. Each task gives the page a different arrangement and handling sequence.

B3's orange-cover version contains open stocking space for the referee to complete. Its blank intervals and open-ended boxes leave room for encounter preparation, and the instructions give those spaces their role. The field has a shape before it has contents: a number establishes its address, surrounding entries establish the sequence, and the available area sets a practical scale for the addition.

X1's 1983 revision uses a three-column grid, running furniture, pictogram contents and an angled handout field. A section can finish in one track while another begins across the remaining two. The contents pictograms offer a different entry into the booklet, and the angled field interrupts the regular vertical reading path with an object that has its own orientation.

S3 combines technical diagrams with player displays. Its sixty-four cropped illustration plates form separate digital pages in the selected PDF. The reader moves between these views and the encounter text, using a shared visual detail while consulting information held on another surface. The digital assembly and its page count are recorded in the module source register.

The N1 file contains encounter prose and settlement material, with the separated dungeon-map leaves absent from the selected assembly. The keyed entries still supply local conditions and actions for study. Here the unit of comparison is the encounter record and its information, while the source register records the missing map component.

A repeated arrangement gives the referee a place to look; a local departure gives a particular task room to occur. Columns carry an argument, a wide table aligns values and a display separates a visible scene from its explanation. A new adventure can retain those relationships while changing the size and sequence of the surfaces that carry them.

[L pp. 2–8, 15–18]; [B3 d11–12, d14–20, d22–23, d26]; [X1 d3, d6, d29, d31–33]; [S3 d24–25, d28–39].

Twelve ways to make a place playable

Twelve adventures organize travel, discovery and consequence through different combinations of settlements, keys, rumors, maps and player displays. Read each case beside its relationship diagram and original illustration.

B2

T1

N1

U1

B3

I1

X1

S1

S2

C1

C2

S3

The following pages contain analysis and original demonstrations. The source register identifies each digital witness.

B2

A base that changes between visits

The Keep on the Borderlands



Original visual analogy. A hub keeps a familiar place available while excursions change what a party knows.

The party enters a guarded settlement before it enters the caves. That first exchange matters because the Keep supplies lodging, provisions, help and social consequences, while excursions into the ravine consume resources that bring the party back. The introductory instructions explicitly describe a continuing home base, and the session procedure asks the referee to change explored areas after the adventurers leave [B2 d4, d7–8]. A return-loop diagram connects the two places and records what travels between them. Wounded characters, recovered treasure and news from the caves change the circumstances of the next visit.

Rumor makes the route to the caves uneven before anyone draws a map. The referee may give each player a private report, and players may choose whether to share it; the table identifies false reports for the referee without making that distinction available to the adventurers [B2 d7, d9]. On digital page 9 the list sits beneath instructions for releasing it. A referee consulting the list can see both the report and the rule governing who receives it. A proposed rumor diagram uses one line for transmission and a separate mark for reliability, so a report can pass between several people while its accuracy remains a private referee entry.

The caves' overview describes tribal conflict, adaptation to adventurer tactics, consequences of ransom and later occupation of cleared areas [B2 d16]. These instructions change the situation attached to each numbered location. A key identifies where a group begins, while the surrounding procedures govern movement and response. A proposed state panel beside a stable room number records the new defender, warning device or affiliation after an excursion. The referee can update the occupation and defenses while continuing to use the same address on the map.

Mixed scan and reconstructed text; inserted references and graph worksheet. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

B2

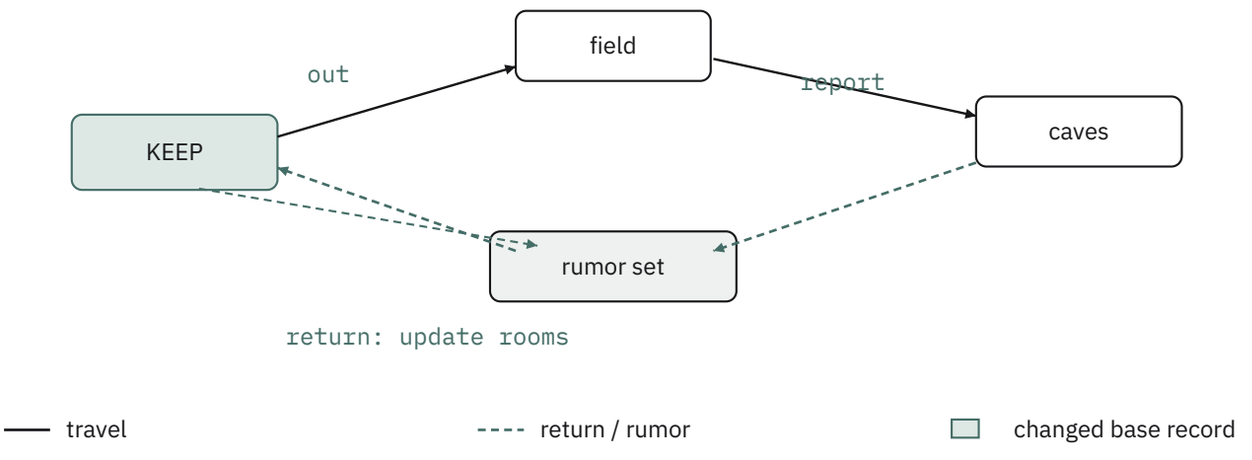
The Keep on the Borderlands

Routes and consequences

The mapping instructions introduce a further division between kinds of knowledge. Players construct their own map from spoken directions, and the referee is cautioned against correcting every mistake [B2 d7–8]. The printed map supplies the referee's geography; the player map records what the group has understood from the description. In a staged mapping example, the reader first receives a spoken route, then draws it, then compares that drawing with the complete plan. A missed turning or mistaken distance can be traced to the description that produced it, and the next passage changes what the players can locate.

The Keep also changes who will receive the party and what support becomes available. The inner-bailey instructions relate access to conduct and service, giving the return journey a social consequence [B2 d9]. A boundary around the base can therefore carry conditions for admission, while annotations on the return arrows record what the party has done and whom it can now approach. Retreat, unsuccessful bargaining and renewed preparation each lead back through that boundary. Across the ravine, the caves' occupants are also adjusting to the party's last visit.

B2 / base changes between visits



Relationship diagram. Return-loop exploration with asymmetric rumors and adaptive occupants.

The Keep is a comparatively protected base, but admission and aid can depend on conduct; the caves change during absence.

T1

Ordinary services, concealed allegiances

The Village of Hommlet

Hommlet gives the referee a village whose ordinary transactions can carry hidden consequences. The party can seek lodging, buy equipment and find companions, but the keyed descriptions also record affiliations and motives unavailable at first glance [T1 d6–7, d10–11]. The same visit that supplies rope or a bed can expose the party's plans. An encounter layout can place the public service beside the private affiliation, allowing the referee to follow how an ordinary purchase or conversation reaches someone with an interest in the expedition.

T1 marks confidential material with bold type or parentheses, and its instructions encourage a referee who knows the material to present it in their own words [T1 d4–5]. The keys on the following pages put that distinction into practice. Comparing one of these passages with a boxed example shows two ways of directing the referee's speech. A border groups an extended description for delivery; a change in weight or parentheses can distinguish private information within the running text, where the referee must notice it before continuing aloud.

The instructions also ask the referee to change the village map as play alters the place and to add details where needed [T1 d5]. A numbered building supplies a stable address as its inhabitants move, die or change their relationship to the party. A proposed state record keeps that address beside dated entries for the changes. The next visit begins from the latest entry, while the building's position and its connections to neighboring places remain available on the map.



Original visual analogy. At the margin, the messenger marks a return to information.

Raster original-page scan with black map leaves and a split blue village foldout. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

T1

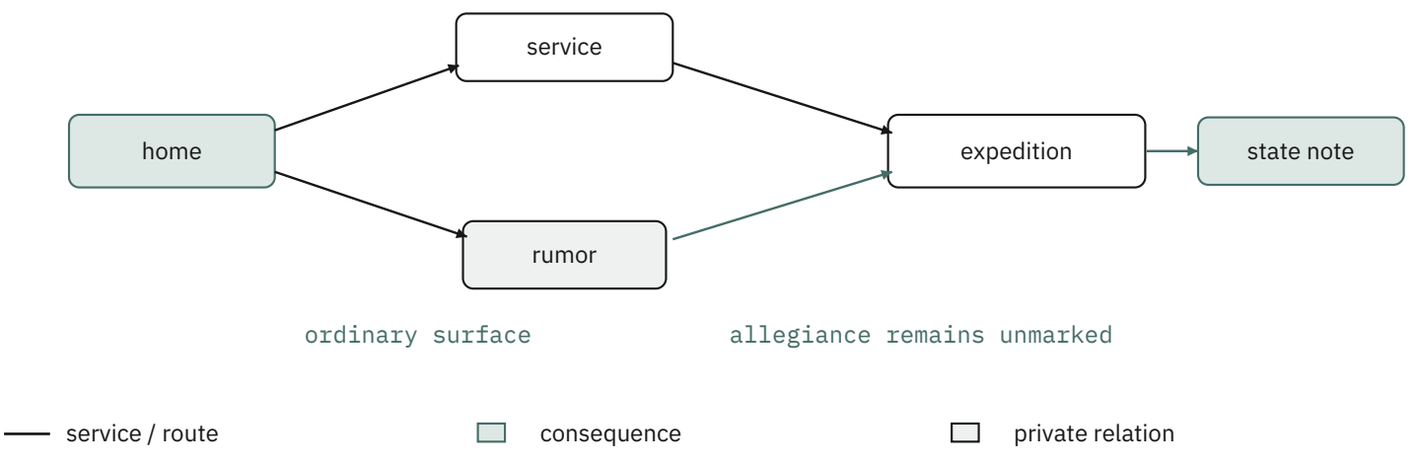
The Village of Hommlet

Routes and consequences

The transition to the moathouse changes the page's job. Digital page 14 gives the ruin a broad exterior image beneath a new section heading, while the next page begins the encounter key and its random-event procedure [T1 d14–15]. The image introduces the place before the reader begins consulting individual locations. A threshold illustration in a new adventure can perform this work by showing the approach, entrances and surrounding ground, then giving way to the numbered entries used during exploration.

Inside the ruin, a physical trace can change a navigational decision. The torture chamber's blood trail helps reveal a hidden route [T1 d16]; elsewhere the key permits bargaining and disguise and directs defenders to reinforce one another [T1 d17–18]. A relationship diagram can distinguish physical passages, evidence pointing toward a hidden route and movement triggered by an alarm. Possible repercussions in Hommlet after Lareth's death reconnect the expedition with the village [T1 d18]. The return journey brings the party back to people whose affiliations and reactions can change the consequences of what happened at the moathouse.

T1 / service hub, concealed allegiance



Relationship diagram. Persistent home settlement joined to an expedition and its consequences.

Bold type and parentheses mark referee-only text within the keyed descriptions.

N1

A village read through suspicion

Against the Cult of the Reptile God



Original visual analogy. Witnesses can distribute a lead without knowing the same part of it.

Orlane asks the adventurers to judge people whose visible behavior is unreliable. The introductory village instructions explain that cult members and other citizens cannot generally be distinguished by appearance; apparent friendliness may conceal danger, while honest residents may be frightened and withdrawn [N1 d6]. A player-facing description gives the party a resident's behavior. The referee's account adds allegiance, motive and the conditions under which that behavior may change. An allegiance diagram consequently belongs beside the private key, where the referee can consult it while the players work from what they have seen and heard.

The module sets out three stages: investigation in the village, travel toward the cult headquarters and exploration of the lair [N1 d5]. Within the first stage, knowledge arrives through several residents. The weaver and liveryman provide warnings and observations, while the mayor combines suspicions with a mistaken theory about the hermit [N1 d8–9]. A relationship diagram connects each speaker to a report and the place it concerns. Marking a report as observation, inference or suspicion lets the referee follow how several accounts can agree about a disturbance while disagreeing about its cause.

The key's first layer gives the referee an arrival description. Its surrounding text contains motives, affiliations and conditions that become relevant through questions or actions [N1 d5–6]. The division also follows time: the party sees a building before it earns another person's confidence. A proposed encounter layout places the arrival description above a private note with the resident's motive and the action that could change their response. As conversation develops, the referee moves from the shared description to the relevant condition and reveals the next piece of information.

Mixed scan/OCR/vector file; separate dungeon-map leaves are absent. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

N1

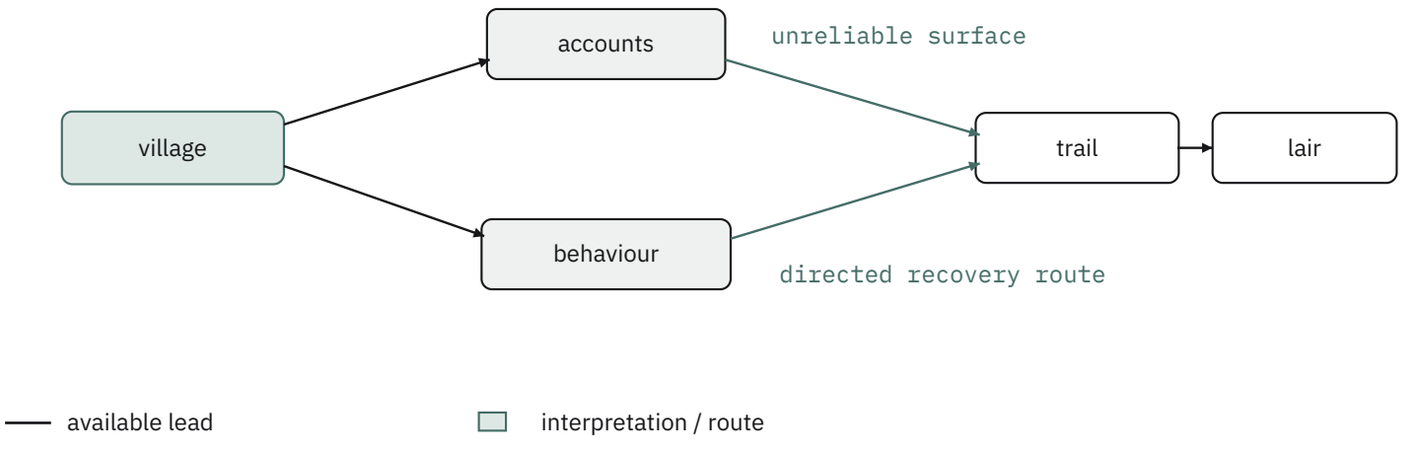
Against the Cult of the Reptile God

Routes and consequences

The settlement continues to change when the party rests or leaves. Digital page 22 supplies abduction procedures and a schedule for attempted kidnappings of villagers; the earlier introduction explicitly warns that cult activity continues during journeys away for training [N1 d6, d22]. A return diagram can keep the village's geography constant and attach the scheduled attempts to elapsed time. When an attempt occurs, the referee updates the affected resident's status. The next visit then begins with the consequences recorded against that house and the people connected to it.

Ramne and his familiar provide a strong route to the lair, while the introduction allows alternative leads and the trail instructions help the referee bring the party to the destination [N1 d6, d13–14, d23]. The village investigation can stall, and these provisions give the referee ways to resume the expedition. The structure narrows from uncertain social encounters to a directed journey and the exploration of a particular headquarters. The conclusion then returns attention to Orlane's recovery and future dangers [N1 d31]. The party's discoveries and actions at the lair acquire consequences in the houses and relationships encountered at the beginning.

N1 / suspicion becomes a directed expedition



Relationship diagram. Social investigation leading into a directed expedition.

Village investigation leads to a directed expedition through Ramne, alternative leads and the trail procedure.

U1

An explanation beneath the haunting

The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh



Original visual analogy. A cutaway gives the reader access to the mechanism while the observer faces its shadow.

The Haunted House is introduced through a reputation that the referee already knows how to explain. U1 gives the referee the smuggling operation behind the apparent haunting while asking the players to discover that explanation through play [U1 d5–6]. Reports about the house shape the party's expectations; visible conditions supply evidence to inspect; the private key describes the operation producing those conditions. An exterior illustration can establish what the party encounters on arrival, while a referee diagram connects the apparent disturbances to their concealed causes.

The two episodes also require different kinds of preparation. Saltmarsh serves as the place to rest and receive the next commission, and the module asks the referee to build much of the town's local detail [U1 d4–5, d17]. The resulting hub-and-spoke structure joins two extensively keyed expedition sites through a settlement developed by the referee. Preparing the return to town therefore involves different work from preparing a visit to the house: the referee must supply the local people and services through which the next commission reaches the party.

The familiar split between boxed description and open referee information is stated explicitly, but the same guidance warns against treating people as permanent room furnishings [U1 d6]. Smugglers move, communicate and respond. A key establishes an initial condition that can be overtaken by events. A proposed response record links several room addresses to an alarm procedure. An unheard approach leaves the starting positions intact; an alarm changes the entries together, allowing the referee to track the response across several locations.

2001 TOCKA/InDesign reconstruction of the 1981 adventure. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

U1

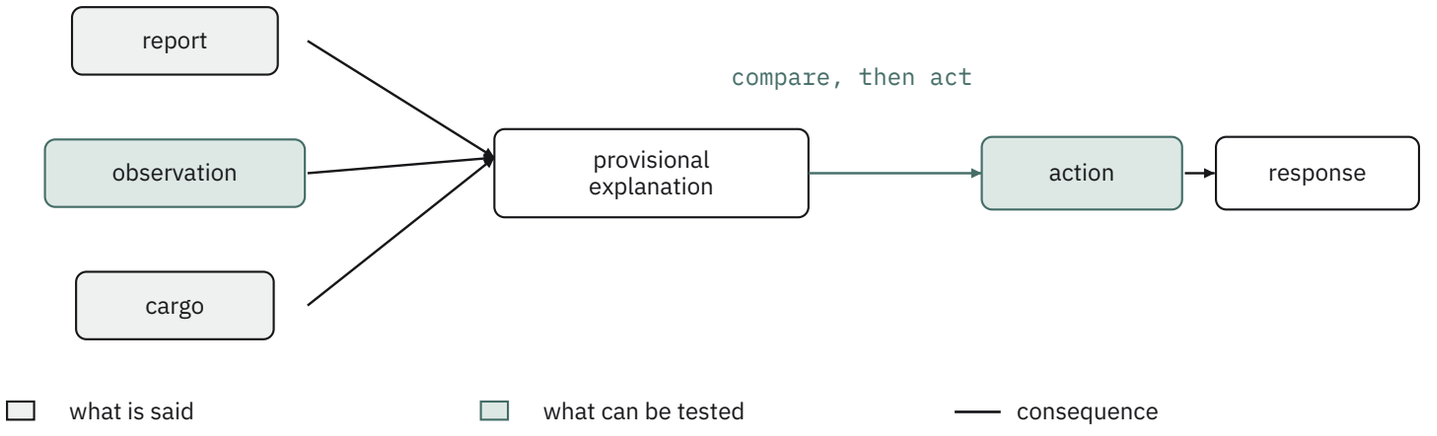
The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh

Routes and consequences

Ned's staged captivity provides a smaller and more local example of inference. The key gives the referee the deception, while the recently oiled lock creates a discrepancy the party may notice [U1 d11–12]. Inspection connects the physical condition of the door with the captive's account. An original example could put a recently repaired hinge in an otherwise abandoned place, giving the players a visible detail to compare with what they have been told. The public drawing shows the repair, and the private note identifies who made it and why.

Before boarding the Sea Ghost, deductions about the signalling code and plans made with the excise men affect the party's timing, approach and risk of discovery [U1 d17–19]. Once aboard, people, documents and cargo provide routes toward understanding the arms shipment, and the conclusion allows for missed or mistaken deductions [U1 d18, d24–25, d29]. A diagram can connect the shore evidence to a boarding plan, then connect the discoveries aboard the vessel to an explanation of the shipment and the next expedition. The party's working account changes as it questions a witness, reads a document or finds the concealed weapons.

U1 / explanation beneath the haunting



Relationship diagram. Investigative reinterpretation followed by an information-dependent second expedition.

The referee develops the town connecting two keyed expeditions; the conclusion accommodates missed or mistaken deductions.

B3

An unfinished room can change on return

Palace of the Silver Princess

An empty room is a deliberate part of this version’s working method. The introduction tells the referee to leave some areas unstocked and revisit them later, so a room that once offered rest may change before the party returns. Blocked passages also provide places to extend the complex. The orange-cover B3 therefore puts some of its future in the referee’s hands while retaining enough completed encounters to demonstrate how the unfinished areas might be used. [B3, digital p. 4]

Its information also travels outside the palace. The tinker’s rounds give the referee a plausible person through whom news can pass, and the rumor section allows false, true and partly true accounts. It even proposes a rumor sheet or campaign newsletter, extending circulation beyond the session. A report can consequently arrive before the characters reach the location that will test it, and the person who carries that report has an ordinary reason to travel. [B3, digital pp. 8–9]

The reading boundary is unusually explicit. The instructions identify the boxes as information to give players on entering an area and reserve unboxed material for the referee, including facts revealed only after a search. Elsewhere, blank fields sit beside finished descriptions. The page alternates between presentation, adjudication and authoring space, with the blank fields providing room for the referee to add inhabitants and conditions. [B3, digital pp. 10, 16]



Original visual analogy. A return route carries changed possessions, conditions and knowledge.

Digitized original-version layout; varying crop boxes. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

B3

Palace of the Silver Princess

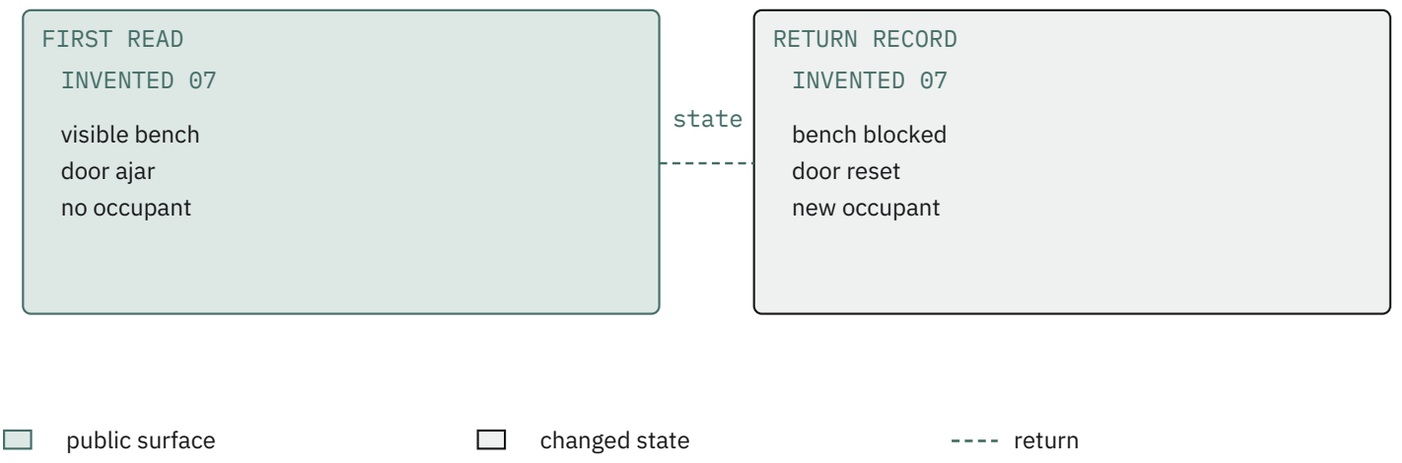
Routes and consequences

An original two-visit example applies B3’s restocking procedure to a storage chamber. On the first visit, the chamber contains a visible bench, a wet floor and no occupant. On the second, a displaced creature has moved in and blocked the bench with its bedding. The diagram keeps the same room address while the drawing changes the evidence a visitor can see, and a separate occupancy record holds the creature’s arrival and its effects on the room. The referee can update those conditions while retaining the chamber’s dimensions and connections.

A proposed rumor sheet gives each public report a named speaker and keeps its truth flag in a separate referee register. A date belongs on the sheet when the age of the report affects what the players can infer from it. Several reports may point toward the storage chamber: one describes a dry place to sleep, another mentions recent footsteps, and a third records a missing bundle of straw. The register connects each report to the visit or inspection that could test it, preserving the difference between the chamber’s earlier use and its current occupant.

The finished key and the empty field require different amounts of space. A finished key gathers the description, occupants and procedures the referee needs during a visit; a field awaiting a decision leaves room for additions. Place the two visits to the storage chamber together, with the second occupancy record beside the changed drawing. The reader can compare the new bedding and blocked bench with the first visit while following the room number back to the same position on the plan.

B3 / invented room, changed return



Original room study applying B3’s restocking principle.

The Jean Wells orange-cover version includes deliberate authoring blanks for the referee to complete.

I1

The city exceeds the route through it

Dwellers of the Forbidden City



Original visual analogy. A clue relation requires identifiable sources, a trace and somewhere the trace can lead.

A group can enter this city by more than one route, and the referee can let the search for an entrance become part of the adventure. The opening geography describes an enclosed rift and passages through its sides. Flying into the city brings a creature encounter, with instructions for the referee to account for those creatures afterward, while guides can bring the party directly to a chosen entrance when that better suits the session. [I1, digital pp. 3–5]

The distinction between tournament and campaign play is particularly revealing. Tournament instructions restrict the group to A1–A10 and the connecting passages, with a three-and-a-half-hour limit. The printed adventure supplies a much larger city around that route, and its later campaign section offers motives that can produce substantially different tasks. A party hired to prevent further raids might destroy the raiders, bribe them, encourage conflict between groups or obstruct access. Those alternatives are explicitly offered in the text, making the objective broader than a prescribed sequence of fights. [I1, digital pp. 4–5, 23]

The factions give those alternatives practical traction. The referee receives relationships among powerful organizers, their allies and other inhabitants, including reasons some groups may assist the party under certain conditions. A map locates the encounters, while the social account explains how strangers seeking help or starting a conflict affect the people already there. The text places these relationships before the detailed keys, giving the referee a set of interests to consult as the party moves between locations. [I1, digital p. 4]

Later fitted live-text reconstruction. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

I1

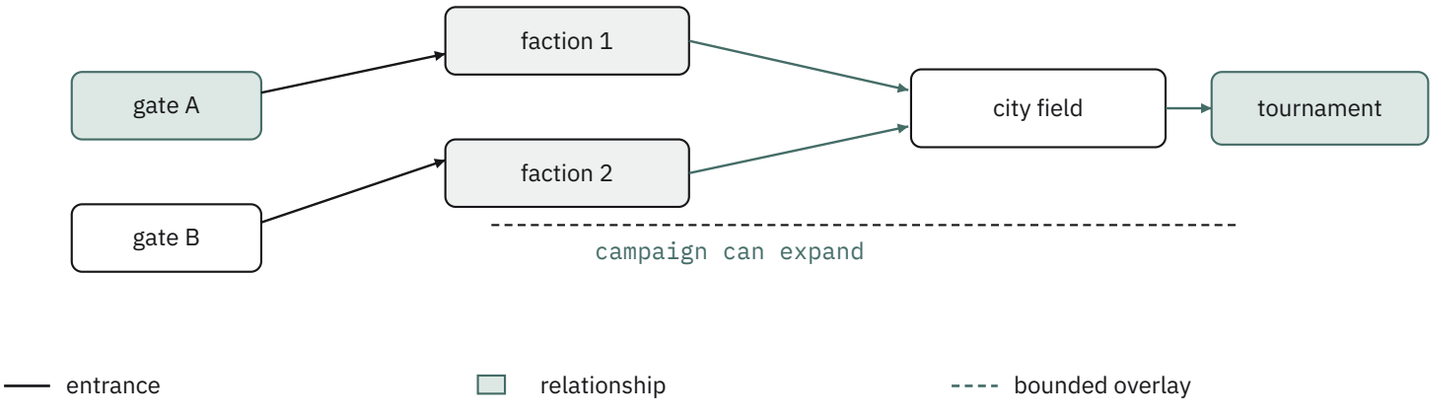
Dwellers of the Forbidden City

Routes and consequences

A proposed city spread places an original plan beside a relationship diagram. The plan locates the entrances and destinations; the relationship diagram connects inhabitants through assistance, rivalry and obligation. A narrow overlay identifies a single-session route through the site, leaving the surrounding places and relationships visible. The referee can prepare the marked route first and use the adjacent diagram when the party's decisions bring another group into the expedition. A changed destination then has a location on the plan and a set of affected interests beside it.

I1's expansion pages propose rescues, rival expeditions, underground conflicts and other campaign seeds for the referee to develop. A rescue premise places prisoners across the city and gives the party a search objective. Preparing that premise requires the referee to locate the prisoners, decide who knows about them and establish ways the adventurers can obtain that knowledge. The seed supplies the motive and broad situation; those encounter and information details become part of the referee's campaign preparation. [I1, digital pp. 23–24]

I1 / expandable city, bounded route



Relationship diagram. Multiple entrances; faction relationships; bounded tournament route within an expandable campaign site.

A timed A1–A10 tournament route sits inside a larger city with campaign seeds for the referee to develop.

X1

A route that becomes a record

The Isle of Dread



Original visual analogy. An object, route and destination invite three different scales of reading.

The party acquires a partial record before it acquires a route. In the 1983 revision used here, a recovered ship’s log and an incomplete map lead the characters toward the island, and the referee may let players read the log themselves. Local investigation supplies corroboration, then the group must arrange transport. The text offers several financial and practical arrangements for obtaining a vessel, so even the journey begins with decisions that attach the expedition to people and resources outside the destination. [X1, digital pp. 6–7]

Once the party lands, the map changes through use. The exploration procedure permits characters to chart neighboring hexes, but mountains and dense vegetation can block their sight. The referee therefore manages two records at once: the more complete geography available behind the screen and the partial geography assembled by the players as they move. Drawing a newly visible ridge is an event in the adventure because it alters the next route the group can choose. The numbered locations anchor particular encounters while the wandering-monster tables supply movement and uncertainty between them. [X1, digital pp. 8–9]

The book also changes the scale of the expedition. Its introductory division into the general island, the central plateau and Taboo Island gives the referee three manageable areas; the maps nest smaller encounter sites within the larger terrain. The procedures change at these thresholds. The plateau calls for encounter checks after travel through three hexes, whereas the Taboo Island instructions dispense with wandering encounters. This difference matters to pacing. The approach consumes distance under a repeated chance of interruption, and the final temple concentrates attention on the encounters already keyed there. [X1, digital pp. 4, 23, 25]

Raster scan of the 1983 revised edition. References follow this Archive.org assembly. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

X1

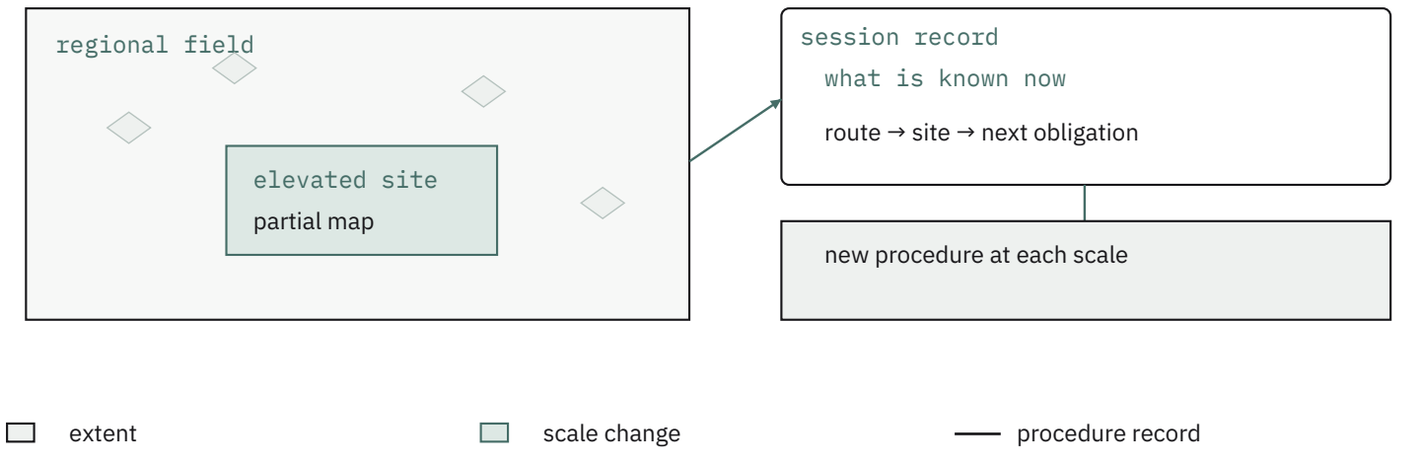
The Isle of Dread

Routes and consequences

A proposed scale diagram places a broad expedition field, a smaller elevated field and an enclosed site beside their travel procedures. An incomplete player map shares coordinates with the referee's fuller map, allowing each newly visible ridge or pass to be located on both. As the party moves inward, the diagram changes the scale and the encounter procedure together. The reader can then follow the shift from travel interrupted by uncertain encounters to the concentrated inspection of a keyed temple.

The appendix then reopens places already explored. It proposes surveying the island, confronting pirates and transporting a living creature, among other possible missions. Each continuation gives a familiar location a different job as the party's objective changes. The survey proposal makes this especially concrete. The players' map becomes the expedition's product, and the group must decide where to travel to complete it, what gaps remain and how to carry its discoveries home. [X1, digital p. 29]

X1 / nested field becomes a record



Relationship diagram. Nested geographical scale; partial cartography; revisitable expedition field.

The 1983 revision nests island, plateau and temple exploration, with different encounter procedures at each scale.

S1

A route that makes the party doubt its own progress

Tomb of Horrors



Original visual analogy. A threshold changes the conditions of attention before a route branches.

The party reaches a hill and must decide where and how to search its face before reaching a keyed entrance. S1 gives the referee specific search durations, tools and digging arrangements, while leaving the choice of position to the players. Its introduction also warns that traps and problems outweigh monster fights. Finding the route requires the group to choose a place, commit time and inspect the result. Even after an entrance appears, testing its surfaces and passages continues to occupy much of the expedition. [S1, digital p. 3; search procedure and referee notes.]

At the entrances, description and mechanism occupy adjacent prose. One tunnel conceals unstable stone above the party; another starts a closing-block countdown. The main corridor includes painted surfaces, a coloured path and an embedded message that becomes legible only after sustained observation. Some details can be reported immediately, some require an announced action, and others enter play when the referee resolves a mechanism. Numbered illustrations are called for at specific moments. The key therefore controls both what the party can inspect and the action or duration required to receive the next description. [S1, digital p. 4; keys 1–4.]

The arches make the route depend on both an action and a position. In key 5, pressing coloured stones changes what can be seen; passing through on or off the path produces different destinations. Key 7 returns survivors through a constrained route, while the arch in key 10 separates living travellers from their possessions. A route graph needs those conditions on its connecting arrows. Sequence, position, carried objects and direction determine which destination follows from a crossing, so two characters approaching the same arch can leave it in different places and conditions. [S1, digital p. 5; keys 5, 7 and 10.]

Later PageMaker conversion with live re-typeset text and cropped display leaves. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

S1

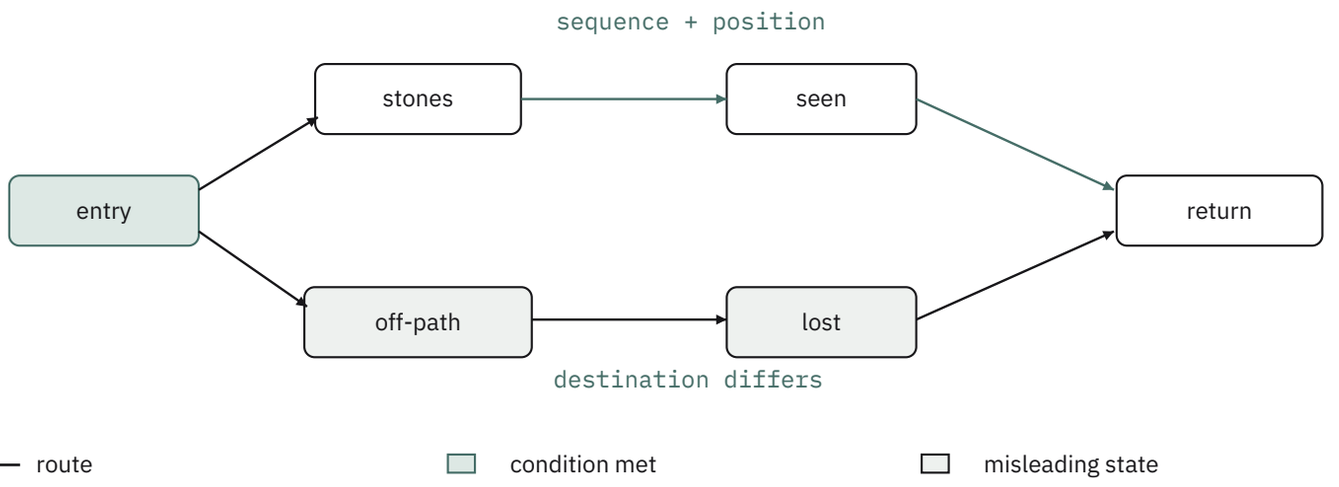
Tomb of Horrors

Routes and consequences

Later, the false crypt stages a complete-looking finish. The apparent enemy, a conspicuously effective weapon and a simulated collapse encourage a hurried departure. The text supplies reasons for suspicion, including the condition of a bag, and discusses how further investigation can expose the deception. Severe penalties and misleading cues make the decision consequential. The scene asks the players to decide whether the apparent resolution is enough to justify leaving, and the referee holds a separate account of what remains behind that apparent ending. [S1, digital p. 7; key 18.]

Return is unusually complicated here. The introduction permits several sessions and recovery between them, removes ordinary wandering-monster encounters, and advises the referee to withhold the relative safety of the entrance. Its separate note imposes a per-round demon check on astral or ethereal characters. Other returns force displacement or confiscate equipment. In a route diagram, each return arrow needs its own result: recovery, relocation, loss of possessions or a departure prompted by apparent completion. The pressure comes from these conditions and the keyed hazards, with the astral or ethereal check applying to its specified travellers. [S1, digital pp. 3, 5, 7.]

S1 / route condition, misleading completion



Relationship diagram. Conditional route and misleading completion.

Ordinary wandering-monster encounters are absent inside the tomb; astral or ethereal characters receive a separate per-round demon check. Return routes can restore resources, force relocation or remove equipment.

S2

Three objectives, with a problem at the point of return

White Plume Mountain



Original visual analogy. A visible object becomes the entrance to another scale of space.

Three stolen weapons establish three concrete objectives before the party enters White Plume Mountain. The message supplied with the introduction gives each object a different set of environmental hints, and the owners recruit the expedition to recover them. The referee notes anticipate more than one session if the party investigates all three branches. The split map at the back of this file locates their routes. Each shares an entrance with the others, then leads through a different sequence of physical problems toward its reward. [S2, digital p. 3; introduction and referee notes; digital pp. 18–19, map.]

A flooded access route brings movement and observation into the same procedure. Mud hides the floor, slows progress and complicates probing, while a guardian at the intersection presents a verbal challenge before opening the routes. A diagram of the three retrieval branches begins with this common entrance and gate. A concealed connection below a pool adds a local alternative, so the larger branch arrangement contains choices within it as well as the initial choice among objectives. [S2, digital pp. 5–6; standard features and keys 1–2; digital p. 8, key 9.]

The individual encounters repeatedly ask players to reason about physical conditions. Hanging disks above boiling mud require attention to spacing, support and periodic eruptions. A rotating passage puts footing and exposure to attack together. A heat-induction corridor makes metal equipment a burden and lists several ways the referee might adjudicate attempts to carry it through. Each location changes the practical meaning of an ordinary action such as crossing, carrying or waiting, and the key keeps that changed condition beside the procedure for resolving it. [S2, digital pp. 7–10; keys 7, 11–12 and 19.]

Raster text scans in a later QuarkXPress assembly. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

S2

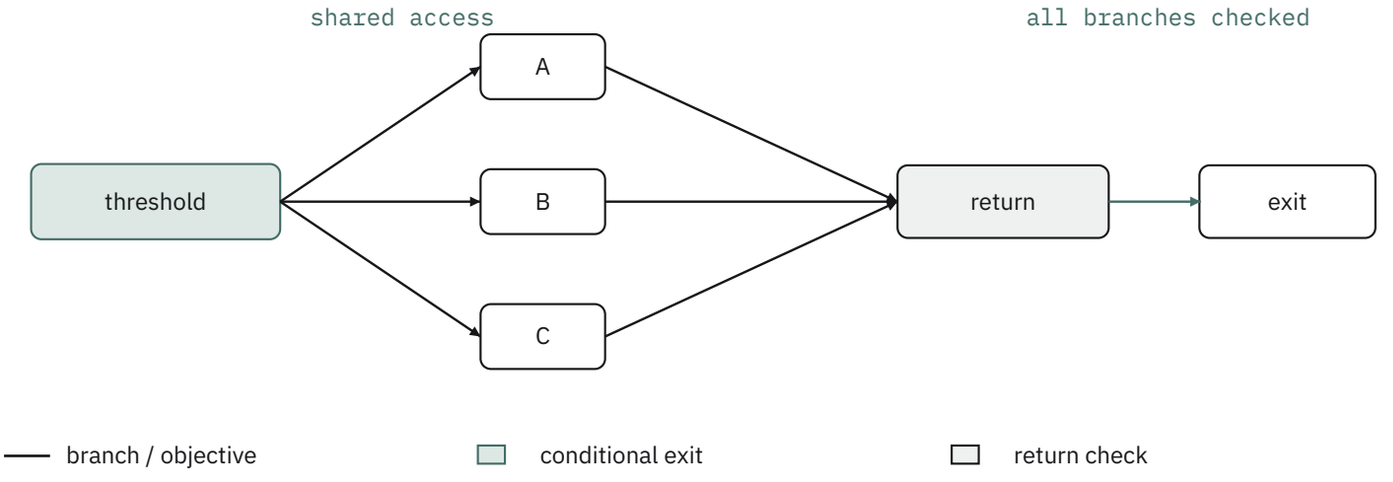
White Plume Mountain

Routes and consequences

A local water circuit makes the difference between a branch and a loop especially clear. The suspended stream carries boats from one chamber to an ambush and then returns toward the starting chamber. Direction and current determine where a boat goes, and an arrow around the circuit records both. Nearby, a terraced room uses a section diagram to explain successive depths, retaining walls and the effects of a triggered release of water. The plan locates the terraces across the chamber; the section supplies the height differences needed to understand what happens when the water is released. [S2, digital p. 12; keys 23–26.]

The reward does not automatically end the journey. An optional end note permits a renewed barrier and a confrontation when a successful party tries to leave with multiple weapons. The referee may omit the episode if the group has already suffered heavily or intensify it for an unusually easy expedition. S2 also checks for wandering monsters each turn. These mechanisms put pressure on different parts of the journey: the branch obstacles govern particular crossings, recurring checks interrupt exploration, the water circuit carries travellers back, and the optional confrontation can obstruct their final departure. [S2, digital p. 5, wandering monsters; digital p. 15, end note.]

S2 / shared threshold, three objectives, return



Relationship diagram. Shared threshold, three retrieval branches, return path, conditional exit.

The three retrieval branches contain local circuits and a concealed connection; the referee can add an exit confrontation.

C1

An escape route measured against two clocks

The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan



Original visual analogy. A dwindling reserve changes how long a party can afford to inspect a place.

Tamoachan begins its tournament expedition by dropping the party below ground. The immediate objective is escape, and the lower chambers contain poisonous air. The campaign instructions also allow a more conventional entrance and later returns. In the tournament opening, the party starts inside the danger and must find a way upward while the air continues to damage them, making a prolonged search increasingly costly even where several routes are available. C1 gives the group an environmental reason to move before any particular monster becomes the focus of play. [C1, digital pp. 3–5; background, referee notes and key 1.]

The instructions specify a two-hour limit for tournament play and offer a shorter version ending at room 39. Poison damage supplies a second pressure within the fiction, with the affected area defined as rooms and passages 1 through 38. The gas also reduces the range of flame-based light. Searching therefore costs both table time and exposure, while limited visibility constrains what can be described at once. C1 gives the referee guidance about reporting remaining minutes. A two-clock record can place that announced time beside the exposure procedure, with each entry tied to the action or interval that advances it. [C1, digital p. 4; gas and tournament rules.]

The page explicitly establishes two audiences. Boxed passages supply information to read aloud, and the unboxed passages supply referee knowledge. The introduction warns that two encounter descriptions depend on the direction of approach; it also directs the referee to show keyed illustrations according to what the characters can see. The border locates the shared description, and the key and illustration number direct the referee to the next passage or image. The direction-sensitive encounters add a further step: establish the party’s approach, then select the description that belongs to it. [C1, digital p. 3; Notes for the Dungeon Master.]

Acrobat Capture scan; varying crops and mixed orientation. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

C1

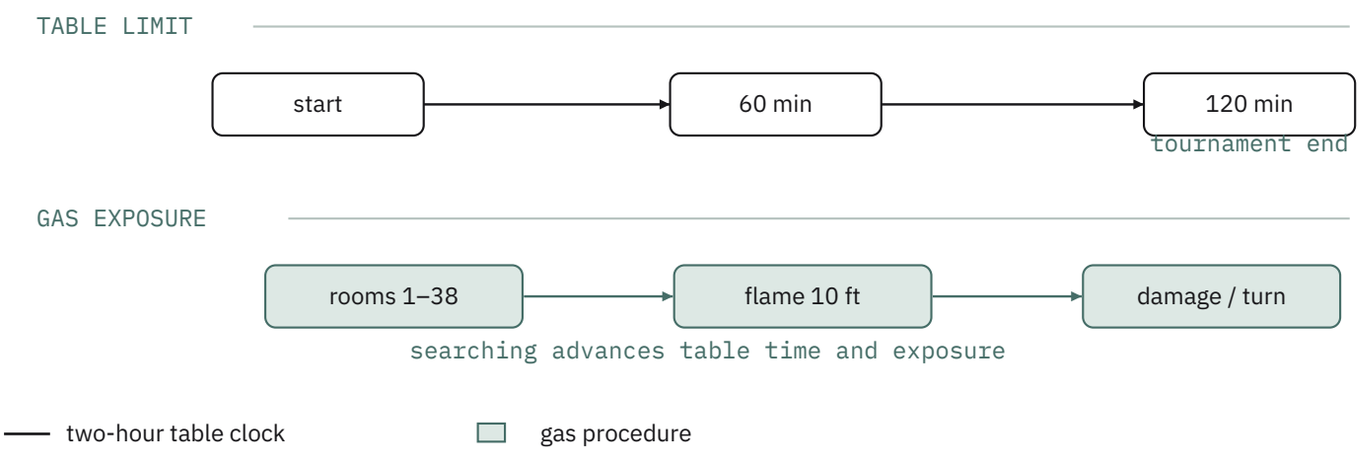
The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan

Routes and consequences

The opening vault demonstrates how disclosure depends on available light. Before illumination, the referee describes what the characters touch, and the source distinguishes normal magical light from the weak range of a flame in the poisoned air. Elsewhere, a sand trap gives its changing effects in a round-by-round table, specifying when movement becomes restricted and when escape becomes much harder. The encounter intensifies as the referee advances through those rows. A proposed encounter panel pairs the state sequence with its timing instruction, placing the current restriction beside the next change the referee must apply. [C1, digital p. 5, key 1; digital p. 14, continuation of key 24.]

Campaign return changes the problem again. The introductory notes permit withdrawal to replenish spells or obtain equipment and tell the referee to restock some cleared areas while maintaining balance. The gas can eventually disperse after doors are opened, but on a timescale much longer than a tournament sitting. The referee can therefore run an urgent competitive escape or allow a campaign expedition to return with different equipment and encounter changed conditions. C1 describes its fictional temple as drawing on Maya and Aztec/Toltec material, combining those references within the invented setting of the adventure. [C1, digital pp. 3–4; module background, return and ventilation instructions.]

C1 / escape route measured by two clocks



Relationship diagram. Escape gradient, turn pressure, timed disclosure and alternative campaign return.

Tournament play imposes an urgent escape; campaign play permits return, replenishment and restocking.

C2

Four collection routes become a single ascent

The Ghost Tower of Inverness



Original visual analogy. Two stacked fields preserve the difference between what can be described and what the referee must track.

Inverness gives the referee a clear objective beneath the ruined keep: collect four parts of a key, with one part placed along each of four routes toward the central room. The text organizes those routes by entrance and states that all lead to the same locked destination. The party may choose its order, but the central door requires the completed collection. A convergence diagram therefore marks each contribution separately, with all four feeding the shared gate. The route order can change while the collection requirement remains fixed. [C2, digital pp. 9–10; dungeon-level instructions and keys.]

The central room changes both the setting and the arrangement of play. Once the assembled key opens it and the survivors enter, a short countdown precedes transport into the tower’s past. Above them lie levels associated with air, earth, fire and water, followed by the jewel chamber. The referee knows the time shift before the players do, and the module awards recognition of that change. The expedition through ruins becomes an ascent through an intact structure, with the collecting routes giving way to a sequence of levels above the transport chamber. [C2, digital pp. 26–27; keys 14–17 and tower introduction.]

The tournament rules explain why that ascent constrains escape. The tower prevents departure except through the supplied recall amulet, with the text explicitly connecting the restriction to comparable challenges for tournament teams. The same introductory material separates boxed descriptions from hidden referee information, marks non-tournament encounters differently and recommends a three-hour real-time limit. These provisions belong to one operating arrangement. The graphic hierarchy helps the referee distinguish what to say, what to omit for this mode and what to record while the players work through a fixed span of time. Campaign use can alter several of those constraints. [C2, digital pp. 5–7, 27.]

Original-page scan with visual aids and sideways character sheets. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

C2

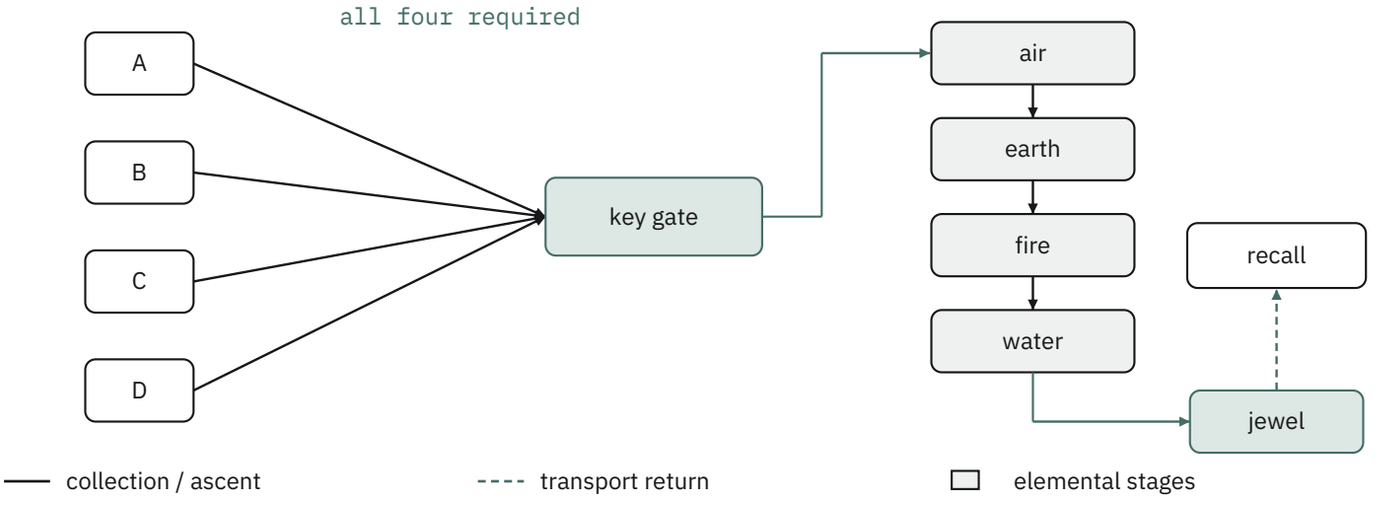
The Ghost Tower of Inverness

Routes and consequences

The chess encounter provides a compact example of action, feedback and recordkeeping. The characters arrive in assigned positions, movement produces visible changes and damage depends on whether each character follows an underlying rule. A displayed visual aid establishes the shared board, while the referee keeps track of starting positions and later permissions. The source accepts ways of bypassing the floor and explains how those choices affect subsequent movement. The nearby diagram locates the positions, the box reports what the party perceives and the unboxed instructions tell the referee how each move changes the encounter. [C2, digital pp. 13, 15, 26; keys 12–13 and visual aid 2.]

At the final gem, player positions become essential information. The source tells the referee to use a visual aid divided into sectors and to track repeated rays, with a predetermined sequence for tournament use. Returning the objective and bringing companions back both affect the score. The recall amulet ends the expedition through a specified transport procedure. The scoring sheets then combine decisions, damage and elapsed turns into a written record of the session, allowing the referee to evaluate what happened during the collection, ascent and return. [C2, digital p. 31, key 33; digital pp. 34–35, record and scoring sheets.]

C2 / four contributions converge, then ascend



Relationship diagram. Four required contributions converge, then a vertical sequence and recall.

Converging mandatory collection routes give way to a more constrained vertical sequence; tournament restrictions are explicitly justified by comparison across teams.

S3

Showing the object starts another procedure

Expedition to the Barrier Peaks

Original player-display study



Original visual analogy. The object offers an action before its effect becomes certain.

A picture in S3 enters play under explicit instructions. The referee must show illustrations at the appropriate moment and may allow players to study them as long as they wish, while recording the passing minutes as rounds. Looking therefore consumes adventure time. Players can keep examining a plate, compare its details and discuss what an object might do while the referee advances the clock and continues the procedures attached to it. [S3, digital p. 10]

The concealed nature of the site sharpens that role. Referee explanations identify a technological environment, while descriptions for the characters use familiar materials and comparisons to describe unfamiliar devices. The atmosphere analyzer, for example, receives both an account of its visible surfaces and an explanation of what its indicators measure. The players inspect the surfaces and indicators; the referee knows their functions. Showing the image lets the group point to particular features, form an explanation and choose what to test. [S3, digital pp. 11, 34]

Access is another form of hidden information. The colored cards belong to a ranked system, with an explicit exception and consequences for using an unsuitable card. The module tells the referee not to explain their function in advance. Elsewhere, the entrance’s opening cycle and the waiting support party give time concrete consequences; the garden level also changes between light and darkness on its own schedule. Doors, illumination and the party’s opportunity to leave therefore require the referee to track more than position on a map. [S3, digital p. 11]

32-page adventure plus maps and 64 individually cropped illustration plates; 105 digital pages in this assembly. References in the text use this file's digital pages.

S3

Expedition to the Barrier Peaks

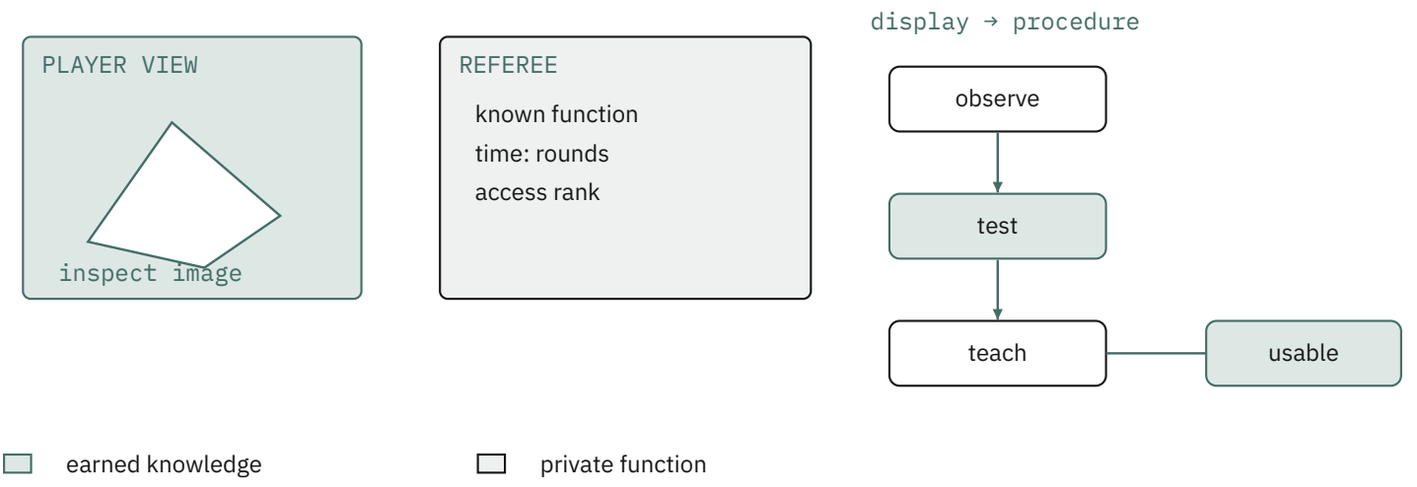
Routes and consequences

Learning an item then receives a separate diagrammatic procedure. Four charts distinguish simple from complex devices and lethal from nonlethal ones. A character's attempts take time, rolls determine progress or setbacks, and previous observation or instruction can modify the attempt. Once someone understands an item, the text specifies how that knowledge can be taught to another character, carrying the result of one person's experiments into the procedures available to the rest of the group. [S3, digital pp. 28–29]

A proposed instrument encounter places an unnamed device in a player-facing frame beside a private function note and a decision diagram. The drawing gives the instrument a few distinct working parts that the players can examine. The diagram links observation, testing and instruction to changes in what the group can do, and a second panel shows the information obtained after a successful test. Revealing that panel changes the next decision: the group can operate the part it now understands or continue investigating another part.

S3 coordinates a room key, a numbered display and the procedures for inspecting or operating what the display shows. The referee moves between those surfaces as the group enters a location, examines a device and attempts to use it. A proposed encounter spread places the display number beside the room address and keeps the time instruction with the testing sequence. The referee can locate the image during the arrival description, then continue from the same reference as the players begin experimenting. [S3, digital pp. 10–11; archived source register]

S3 / showing starts another procedure



Relationship diagram. Timed display; referee/player description split; access hierarchy; procedural learning.

Viewing the numbered illustrations consumes rounds; item use adds a separate learning procedure.

Graphic design as a method of reading

Six designers supply ways to examine the working page. Vignelli clarifies repeated structure; Rand, constrained invention; Bass, the first image; Brodovitch, the page turn; Pineles, editorial illustration; and Sutnar, rapid consultation. The essays apply these principles to the module studies and to new page designs.

A grid that can be interrupted

Rules that leave work for a player

The image before the instruction

A turn of the page changes the scene

Illustration with a job to do

Find the rule while everyone waits

The following pages contain analysis and original demonstrations. The source register identifies each digital witness.

A grid that can be interrupted

A referee looking for a room description needs the page to behave predictably, even when the room needs more space than its neighbour. The problem appears in a column of numbered entries. If every encounter receives the same rectangle, a short entry wastes paper while a long one spills into another box or forces the type smaller. Keep the column in a stable place and let the encounter determine how much of it the description needs, so that the next room number remains easy to find as the text above it grows.

In the RIT-hosted Vignelli Canon, Massimo Vignelli describes the grid as a way to organize information and sustain consistency. He warns against grids that are too coarse to offer choices or so fine that they offer little guidance, and gives horizontal divisions a role alongside the columns. His discussion of type assigns different weights to particular functions. In his account of sequence, the designer works both with the arrangement visible across a spread and with the succession of pages revealed as the reader turns them. [D01, printed pp. 40, 72, 84; digital pp. 21, 37, 43]

Most body-page families in the module study have two columns, while the examined 1983 Isle of Dread uses three. On X1 digital page 29, one section finishes in the first column while a new section begins across the other two. The change occupies a local part of the page. B3 also allows reading boxes to continue with open ends across a break. Both arrangements let a section change length within an established page structure, keeping adjacent material aligned while accommodating the uneven space that different encounters require. [L, pp. 3, 5; X1 digital p. 29; B3 digital pp. 11–12, 14–15]

Three kinds of boundary do different work here. The outside margin separates the publication from its surroundings. The column controls reading width and recurrent alignment. A box marks a change in the use or audience of its contents. A small referee-only consequence can sit directly beneath a player-facing description, with a clear label and enough space between them to separate the two acts of reading. An extensive equipment roster may need the full page width, while its labels retain the type and alignment used elsewhere in the book.

For a new encounter spread, keep two continuous text lanes and a narrow outside lane for keys. Let a wide threshold illustration interrupt the lanes once, then resume the prose on the same alignments beneath it. A table can span both lanes with its row labels at the left edge. To compare the arrangements, close the book, reopen it at the spread and locate the next key without reading the intervening paragraphs. Repeat with a short encounter and a long one, following the room number through any column or page break.

Original comparison diagrams follow the six essays.

Sources: [D] historical design records; [L] structural study; module digital-page citations in the text.

Rules that leave work for a player

An empty field gives the designer work to do when the surrounding instructions establish what belongs there. The blank structural masters preserve several such relationships. A map field establishes the area in which routes can be drawn, and a key lane connects locations to their descriptions. A reading box separates a passage intended for the table from material that belongs to the referee. These fixed relations let the person completing the page choose its contents while keeping the room address, description and audience visible to the people who will use them.

Paul Rand's "Design and the Play Instinct," published in Education of Vision in 1965, discusses how a stated design problem can engage attention. Rand joins constraints to experimentation through assignments whose defined limits give the student something to work against. His examples include the tangram and exercises in proportion, and the discussion moves between abstract arrangements and their practical applications. The student makes choices within a known problem, rearranges the available material and can compare the result with the conditions of the assignment. [D02, opening argument and tangram discussion]

The layout study identifies deliberate stocking spaces in the orange B3, including digital pages 11, 14–20, 22–23 and 26. It also records a blank graph worksheet in B2. These published spaces invite later completion. Other blank masters were made by removing content from an occupied module page, retaining the positions of its map, key or reading fields. The first gives the referee an assignment inside the adventure; the second gives a new designer a page structure to fill. The source inventory records which kind of blank each master represents. [L, pp. 5–6, 10, 12]

For a new design exercise, place a rain collector above an abandoned ferry stair. Give the designer three obligations. The party must have a way to learn that the stair is usable, discover a cost attached to using it and choose another route. Leave the inhabitants, the method of discovery and the cost undecided. One designer might connect the collector to a toll mechanism, while another might make the water itself evidence of recent use. The fixed obligations let both encounters provide decisions through different objects and actions.

Each completed field needs a consequence in play. An illustration reserve can identify the stair, show its condition or expose a choice of approach. A rumor field needs a speaker and a route or action that the report makes possible, with false information identified in the referee's key. The page then carries enough information to put the exercise into conversation. A player may distrust the speaker, inspect the collector or leave by another route; the referee needs to find the relevant description and consequence as each decision changes the party's approach.

Original comparison diagrams follow the six essays.

Sources: [D] historical design records; [L] structural study; module digital-page citations in the text.

The image before the instruction

Before a reader studies a key or a contents list, a large image has already introduced the book. A cover filled with combat directs attention toward opponents and conflict. A sealed threshold raises a question of entry, while a strange apparatus invites inspection of its parts. The opening spread can continue that attention by placing the corresponding question beside the information needed to pursue it. Choosing a threshold picture therefore includes choosing what the reader should look for on the pages immediately after it.

Denver Art Museum describes Saul Bass's poster for The Man with the Golden Arm as a reduction to one dominant symbol, the jagged arm. MoMA's separate object record dates its poster to 1955 and identifies it as a lithograph. In the Denver account, the arm concentrates the film's subject into a recurring image for its presentation. That concentration places one recognizable form ahead of a fuller explanation, giving the viewer a subject to carry from the poster into the film. [D03; D04, object 202.1956]

The module study distinguishes cover hierarchy, interior title page and player display plate. Each can carry a large image, with a different audience and place in the reading sequence. A cover introduces the publication. An interior title picture marks the transition into the body. A display plate gives players a scene to inspect during play. The T35, T36 and T27 masters record the image field and surrounding page structure for these three uses, including the room available for a title, a caption or adjacent text. [L, pp. 13–14]

For a new threshold illustration, imagine a travelling bell whose torn mouth opens onto a narrow stair. The bell gives the viewer a recognizable whole; the stair introduces a question of access. Pooled ink can thicken the bell's lower edge, with broken contours around its mouth and a clear paper gap along the stair. Place this image at the opening of an account of entry and concealed routes, where the reader can follow the depicted passage before encountering a key. Give the figure a caption that identifies the bell and stair as the example under discussion.

A player handout needs a different release condition. If the stair represents a concealed route, showing the complete illustration reveals it. For a proposed pair of facing views, give the referee the whole bell and its interior stair, and give the players its closed exterior. Add the condition for showing the second view to the encounter key. When the party opens the bell, the referee can turn to the interior image and put it on the table, allowing the newly visible passage to become part of the players' next decision.

Original comparison diagrams follow the six essays.

Sources: [D] historical design records; [L] structural study; module digital-page citations in the text.

A turn of the page changes the scene

A spread gives the reader several things at once, while a page turn removes some of them before the next arrangement appears. This difference matters when a book alternates a map, an encounter description and an image that can be shown to other people. A reader moving through the pages in order sees that sequence unfold. At a game table, the referee may keep the map open and return to the same description several times, using room numbers and page references to reach the needed passage from either direction.

The Barnes Foundation’s account of Alexey Brodovitch’s work at Harper’s Bazaar describes groups of small photographs, white space and shifts in scale, layering and colour across a sequence of spreads. It also records his photographs of visiting Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo performances in 1935–37 and their publication in Ballet in 1945. The Jewish Museum’s exhibition checklist identifies individual examples, including Choreartium (Three Men Jumping) and Cotillion (Ballerinas Leaving the Stage), both associated with that book. The named images and the Barnes account connect editorial pacing to the placement and changing scale of photographed movement. [D05; D06, digital pp. 9–10]

S3 digital pages 24–25 place tall image regions toward the central fold and prose toward the outside. The structural study’s T44 master records the pair as two facing inner visual columns. Each picture occupies an edge of the central opening, while the outer columns carry the text. A reader can inspect the two images together and move outward to the adjacent descriptions. This arrangement establishes a relation across the spread as well as a relation between each picture and the text on its own page. [L, pp. 7, 16; S3 digital pp. 24–25]

For a proposed encounter sequence, begin with a distant ferry landing and a small figure listening from the bank. On the next spread, enlarge the damaged bell above the stair and leave the figure out. Follow the scene with an operational diagram that locates the bell, stair and landing together. The change in scale moves from the approach to a particular object, then returns that object to the route through the place. Keep the image captions beside their scenes so that the bell retains its name as its size and surroundings change.

During repeated consultation, the referee also needs a route directly to the rule. Give the proposed scene a stable identifier that survives every change of scale, and connect it to an index or small overview diagram. The reader turning forward can follow the illustrated sequence; the returning referee can use the identifier to reach the damaged bell’s entry while keeping the map open. Check the cross-references by entering at each surface in turn, including the isolated image, and following its label back to the encounter description.

Original comparison diagrams follow the six essays.

Sources: [D] historical design records; [L] structural study; module digital-page citations in the text.

Illustration with a job to do

An illustration can describe the people who use a place, identify an object the reader will need again or establish an uncertainty that the text has yet to resolve. It can also occupy the space needed for an explanation. The commission therefore begins with the particular object, condition or choice that the reader must be able to see. A picture of a doorway might show the worn edge of a latch, the height of a barred opening or the place where a rope disappears through the wall. Each assignment calls for a different view.

RIT’s Cary Graphic Arts Collection records that Cipe Pineles became art director of Seventeen in 1947 and commissioned painters to illustrate fiction. It also records her subsequent work with editor Helen Valentine at Charm, addressing women who worked. The Jewish Museum’s 2021 exhibition checklist identifies “We Work Too,” in the August 1950 Charm, with photography by Robert Frank and art direction by Pineles. Together, these records describe Pineles’s work through the artists she commissioned, the editorial subjects they addressed and the images arranged on the magazine page. [D07; D06, digital p. 22]

The checklist thumbnail for “We Work Too” shows a large photographic field beside a narrower text field. Image and prose occupy adjacent territories, allowing the photograph to establish a scene alongside the article’s account. The module study records several other placements, including a broad image band, a column inset and an angled embedded handout. X1 digital page 6 interrupts the surrounding columns with an angled document field; S2 digital page 17 sets a stanza handout apart and gives it a closing mark. Those boundaries distinguish the document players receive from the instructions surrounding it. [D06, digital p. 22; L, pp. 17–18]

In a new encounter layout, a marginal creature can mark a warning beside the relevant entry, provided the warning stays legible and the same cue recurs at other entries with that function. A keyed scene can show several physical details while the referee’s causal account occupies a separate field. Give a handout a torn or stained edge with a clean area inside it for words and symbols. Let splatter build the depicted object through pooled shadows, broken contours and gaps in the paper, while labels sit on a stable alignment outside the drawing.

For a proposed spread, draw the same invented ferry token in two roles. Place a small spot image beside the key so the referee can identify it, then give the players a larger view showing the features that fit the gate mechanism. Keep those features consistent across both drawings, including the notch that meets the gate and the mark that distinguishes the token from an ordinary coin. The caption can direct attention to those details; the key records what happens when the token enters the slot.

Original comparison diagrams follow the six essays.

Sources: [D] historical design records; [L] structural study; module digital-page citations in the text.

Find the rule while everyone waits

The referee looks for a door, a cost or a consequence while the rest of the table waits. A reference page needs to provide enough information to return to that conversation. Dense material can serve this task when its entry points are clear. A spacious page can make the search harder if labels sit far from their values or every paragraph carries the same visual weight. Follow the route from the question to the needed detail, including each cross-reference and physical turn of the book, to find where the search stalls.

The Art Institute of Chicago’s finding aid for Ladislav Sutnar’s collection describes his work at Sweet’s Catalog Service with research director Knud Lönberg-Holm. Its historical note identifies binder tabs, an index system and double spreads as parts of a unified approach to retrieving product information. The same finding aid records Catalog Design in 1944 and Catalog Design Progress in 1950, and lists the surviving 30 April 1942 memo announcing the catalog’s renovation. These records place the redesign across the binder, its index and the pages reached through them. [D08, digital pp. 2, 6]

B2 digital pages 19–20 assemble unequal reference regions, and digital page 34 aligns a roster without ruling every cell. C1 digital page 30 stacks reference matrices with selective horizontal rules. The module study records these different ways of grouping information for consultation outside the continuous prose sequence. A row label directs the referee toward a value; a separate region collects another kind of record. These arrangements address the same practical problem as a catalog index and its tabs: reaching a particular item within a larger body of material. [L, pp. 5, 11, 17]

For a proposed reference spread, assign a location identifier and keep it unchanged in the map, encounter key, image caption and index. Beneath that identifier, place the visible description in one region and the hidden consequence in another, with a short label for each audience. Give an exit or follow-up reference both a destination and the condition that makes it relevant. The referee can then move from the door’s current state to the next entry with the trigger still attached, including a changed route after an alarm or a newly accessible passage.

A handout separated from the book needs its own identifying mark, and a reduced map needs a readable scale. A relationship diagram needs labels that identify its rooms, routes or stages. Put the encounter identifier on each of these surfaces and trace it from the handout to the map, from the map to the key and from the key to its follow-up reference. Where the chain stops, add the missing destination beside the relevant condition so that the referee can continue the consultation from the page already open.

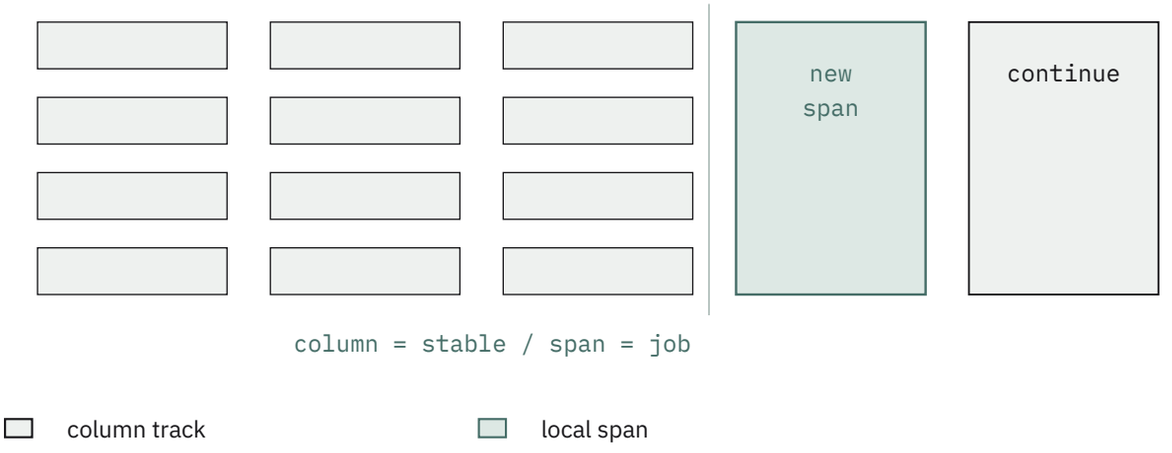
Original comparison diagrams follow the six essays.

Sources: [D] historical design records; [L] structural study; module digital-page citations in the text.

The comparisons in use

A grid that can be interrupted

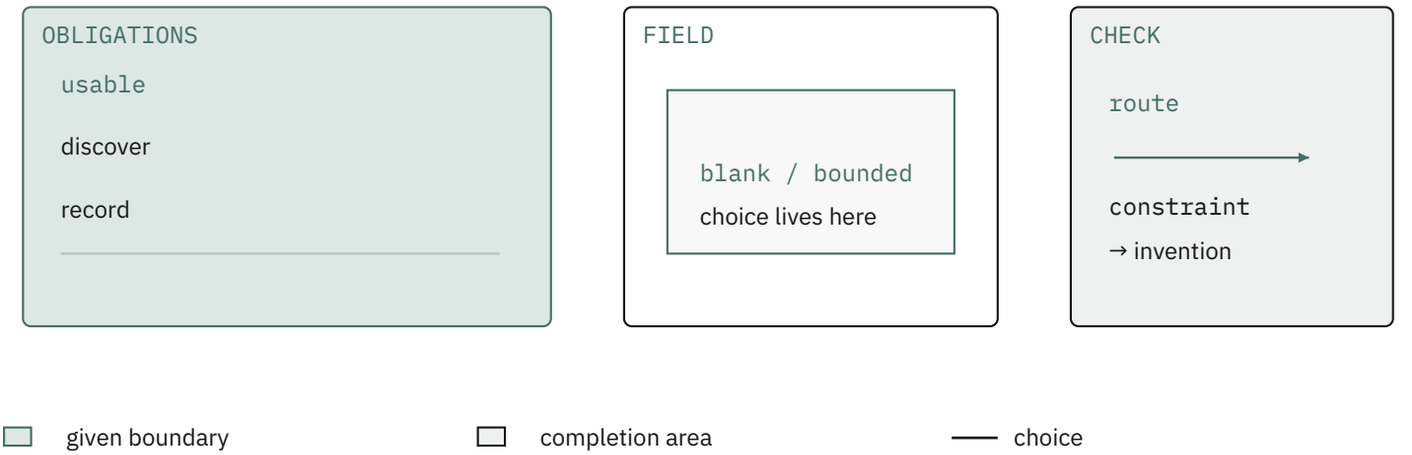
DE01 / grid interrupted locally



Original relational demonstration. Read with the essay on atlas page 44.

Rules that leave work for a player

DE02 / bounded blank field

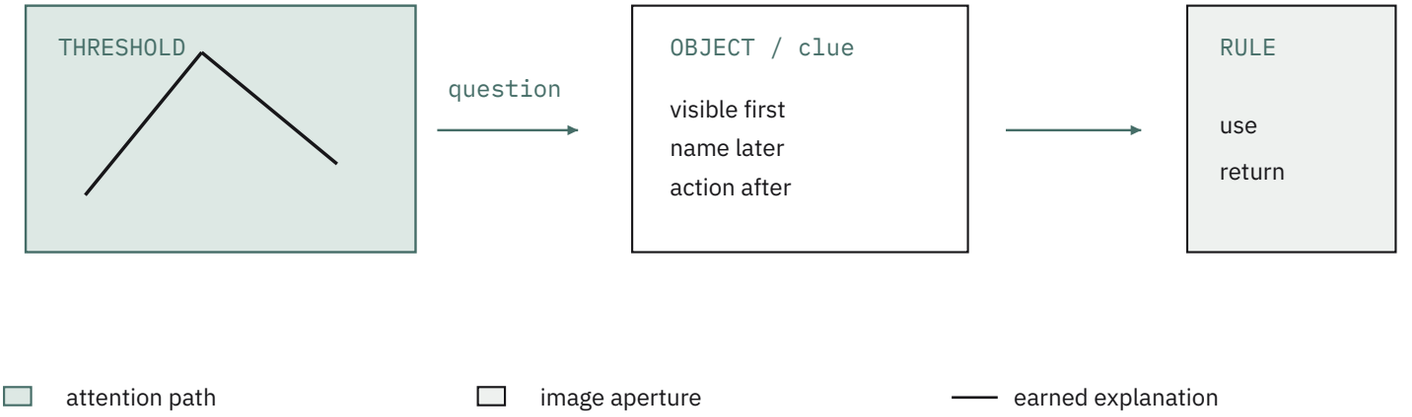


Original relational demonstration. Read with the essay on atlas page 45.

The comparisons in use

The image before the instruction

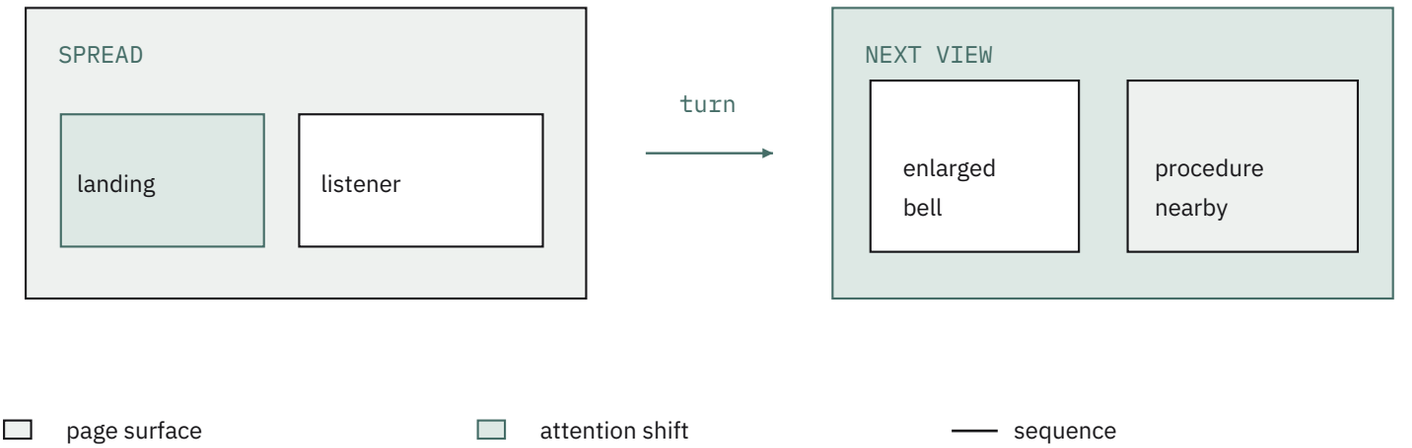
DE03 / image before instruction



Original relational demonstration. Read with the essay on atlas page 46.

A turn of the page changes the scene

DE04 / page turn changes the scene

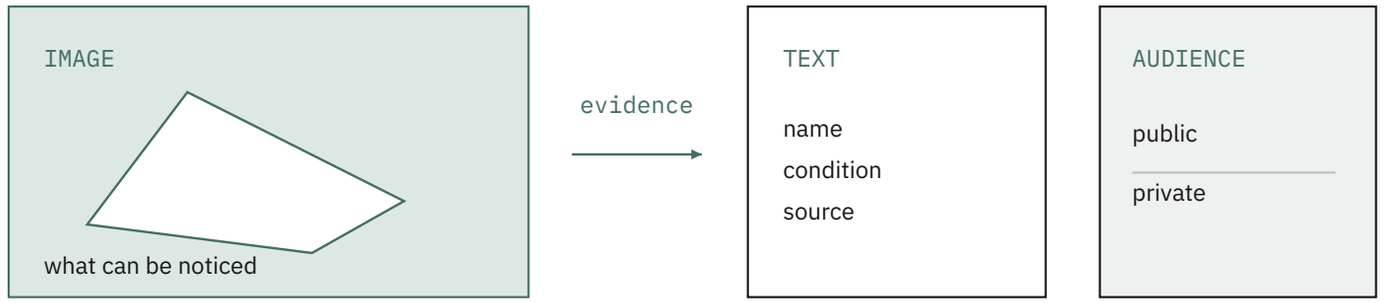


Original relational demonstration. Read with the essay on atlas page 47.

The comparisons in use

Illustration with a job to do

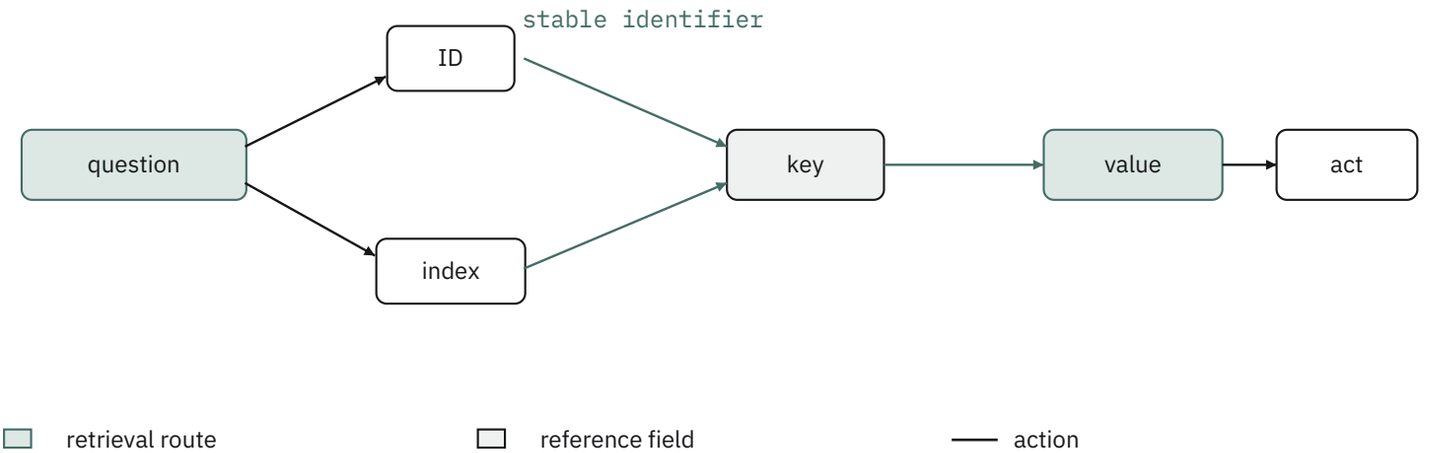
DE05 / illustration with a job



Original relational demonstration. Read with the essay on atlas page 48.

Find the rule while everyone waits

DE06 / find the rule while everyone waits



Original relational demonstration. Read with the essay on atlas page 49.

A place built to test the argument

The Morrow Pump is an original adventure setting built around a ferry crossing. A public notice, a keyed shed, a clue network and a return record connect what the party can see with the decisions available to its referee.



Original Morrow Pump scene. The traveler can see the shed, bell and distant bridge; the concealed cause is withheld.

Public notice	Private key	Clue network	Return record

The Morrow Pump

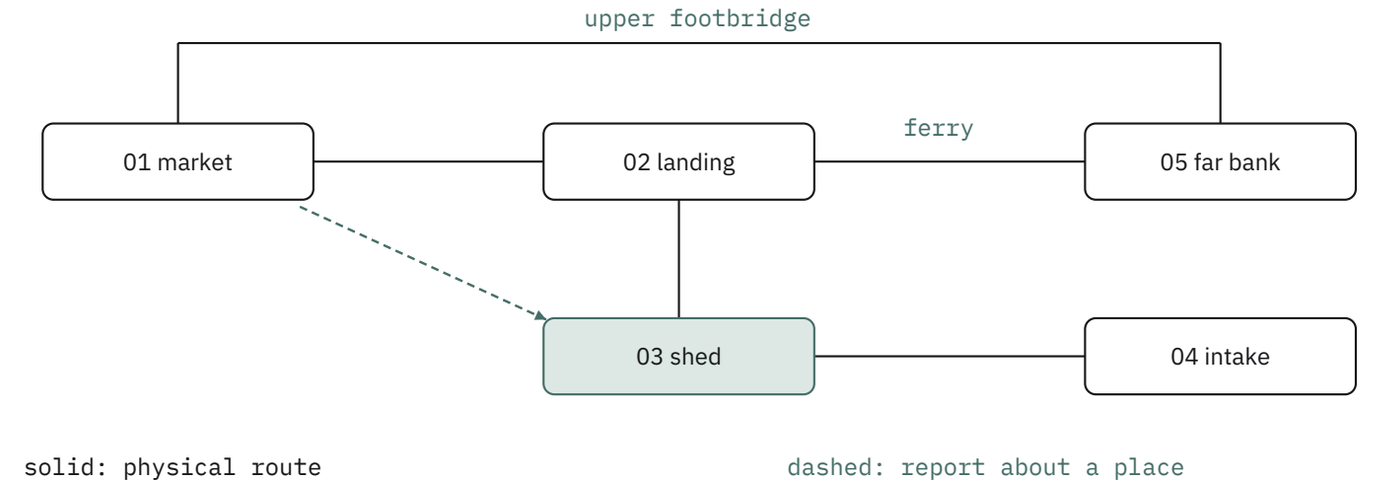
The Morrow Pump is an original scenario built around a settlement's water supply. The pump stands beneath an abandoned ferry shed. Each evening, a keeper closes the crossing to keep drifting seed pods from jamming the intake. A recent repair has changed the sound of the mechanism, and travelers now mistake its amplified knocks for someone trapped below. The party can investigate the sound, question the keeper, inspect the intake or take a longer route to the far bank.

Five locations connect the sound, the machine and the crossing. Their addresses are reused in the map, key and information network. The party can approach through a conversation, an observation or an attempt to cross the water, with each route leading to another part of the situation. The closing bell changes the crossing while those investigations continue.

Solid connections show where a traveler can go. Dotted connections show reports about another place. A person at the market can describe the shed while remaining at the market. The keeper's presence is recorded in the key, where a later movement can be entered alongside the condition of the ferry.

The route back is also specified. After the evening bell, the ferry crossing closes. The party can still return by the upper footbridge, or persuade the keeper to reopen the crossing after clearing the intake. This change gives an earlier clue another use and makes the return depend on what the group learned or changed during its first passage.

Morrow Pump / relation map



The Morrow Pump: a five-location relationship map. Numbers connect the locations to the key; line styles separate physical access from reports about another place.

Original atlas scenario. Related operations appear in the B2, B3, N1, U1 and S3 case studies.

What can cross the table

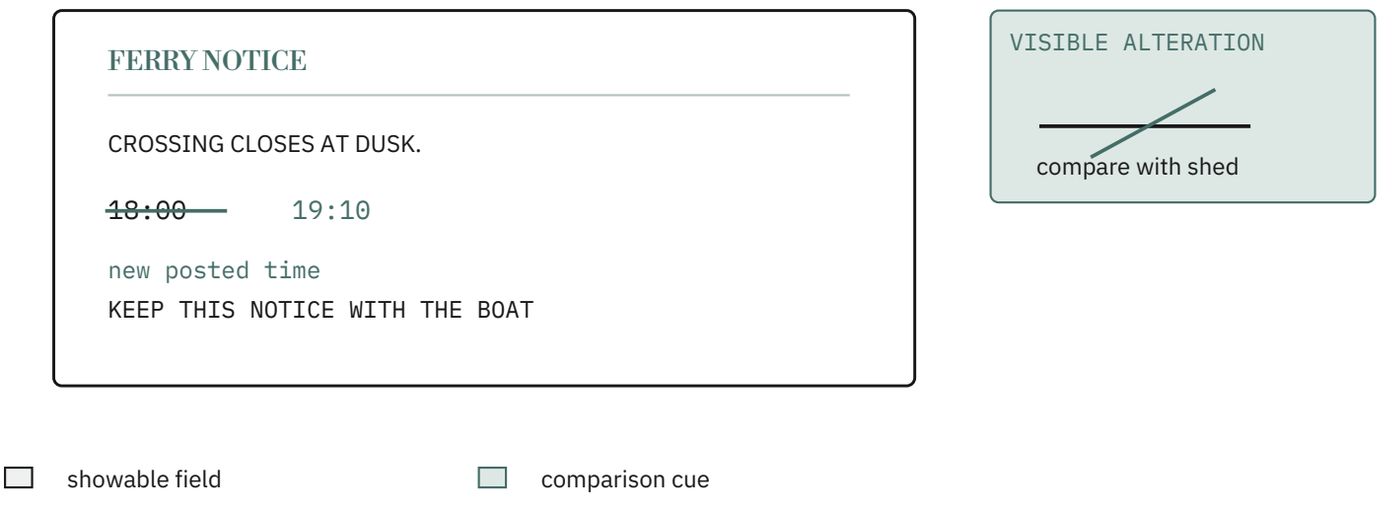
The public notice gives the travelers a closing time, a visible alteration and a reason to compare the words with the working ferry. The enlarged detail makes the alteration available for inspection. Players can question who changed the notice, look for the keeper or return at the stated hour to see what happens.

The referee's separate record explains that the crossed-out closing time follows the repair. The notice is one route to that history. A player who passes it can hear the revised schedule from the keeper or observe the ferry's closure. These overlapping sources bring the same practical question into view at different points along the route.

The border encloses the material that can be shown to the players. Ordinary type keeps the notice legible, and the altered time remains clear beside the replacement. The scene on page 53 gives the notice its setting by showing the shed, the bell and the distant footbridge that travelers can use after the crossing closes.

Present the notice as a separate sheet or show only its bordered field. The neighboring key holds the machine's cause and the keeper's knowledge, which become available through inspection and conversation. Keeping that page with the referee allows the players to study the alteration while deciding where to investigate.

public notice / private explanation withheld



Public notice for the Morrow Pump. The crossed-out time gives travelers a change to investigate; the enlarged detail preserves exactly what they can see.

Original atlas example; compare the explicit audience and display procedures in B3 d10 and S3 d10–11.

The private record stays close to its trigger

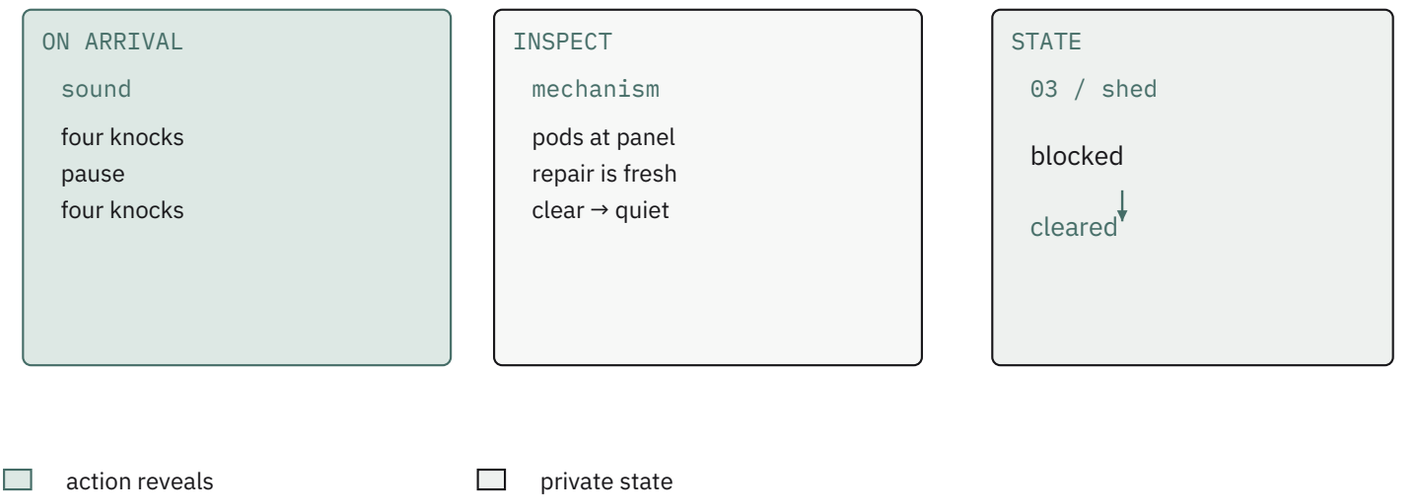
At location 03, a visitor hears four dull knocks followed by a pause. The key distinguishes the sound available on arrival from the mechanism found by inspection. The party can use either piece of information, but they become available through different actions. Keeping both in one undifferentiated paragraph would ask the referee to reconstruct that boundary while people wait.

The private record also names a change the party can cause. Removing the pods quiets the knocks and makes the ferry safe to reopen after the bell. A person who hears the sound again on returning should receive an updated description. The entry therefore includes a small state line, tied to an actual consequence, so that the second visit does not accidentally repeat a condition already changed.

The compact record names the location, the sound, its cause and the result of clearing the intake. A designer adapting the scenario to a game system can attach the relevant action procedure at that point. The rule then sits beside the event it resolves and the condition it changes.

Public text occupies a bounded field, private instructions begin with their triggers, and the state line sits beside the consequence it records. Labels could carry the same sequence in unboxed text. In either arrangement, the referee moves from the arrival description to the action that reveals the mechanism, then records the change for the next visit.

03 / private record close to trigger



Location 03 key. The fields separate arrival information, inspection and action, and persistent change. The state line records the result of clearing the intake.

Original atlas example. Structural comparison [L pp. 4–5, 10]; explicit audience guidance [B3 d10].

Three reports, one testable place

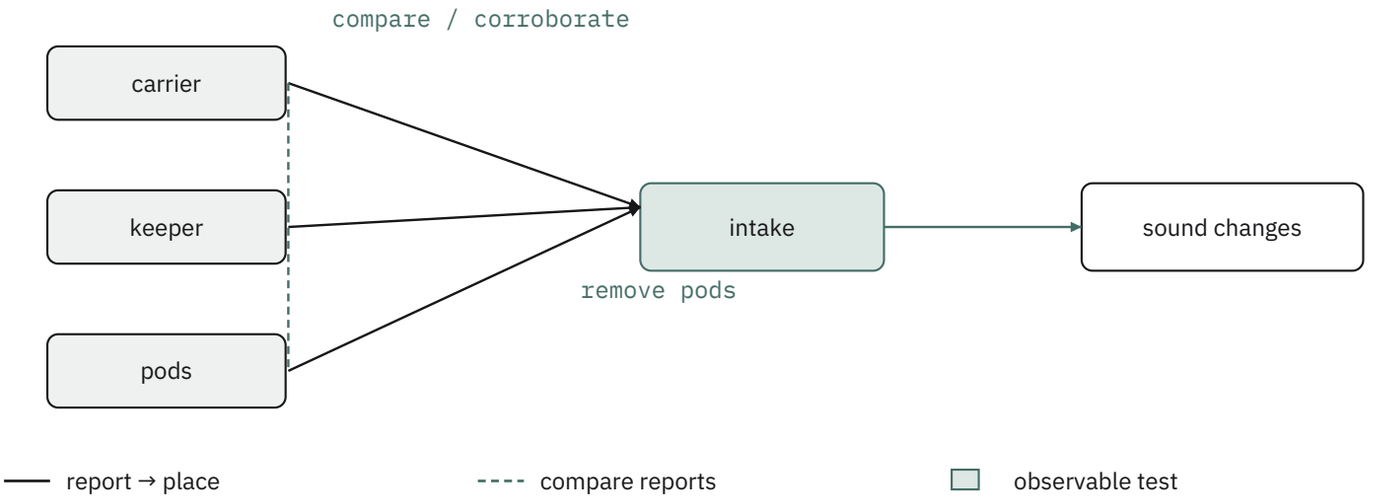
At the market, a carrier says that someone is knocking under the shed. At the ferry, the keeper says the new repair has made the machine louder. At the intake, fresh pods have collected against a vibrating panel. Each source has access to a different part of the situation, so the record keeps the speaker or object beside the information it supplies.

The carrier has heard the sound and supplied an explanation. The keeper knows the repair history but has not inspected the intake since noon. The visible pods give the party a material test. Removing them changes the sound and gives the party a result it can compare with both accounts.

Each solid link points toward a place where the party can act. The dotted link joins reports that can be compared once both have been found. A traveler who has heard the carrier can ask the keeper about the same sound; the keeper's account then gives the party a reason to inspect the recently repaired mechanism.

The party can reach the intake after hearing either account, and the visible pods give the investigation a physical test. The network therefore has several entrances and one shared point of action. Clearing the intake settles the immediate problem through a change that the players can hear and the referee can record.

three reports / one test



Original clue network with three distinct sources and one physical test. The public belief and the private explanation remain separately labeled.

Original atlas example. Related direct readings appear in the N1 and U1 case studies.

The second visit earns its own entry

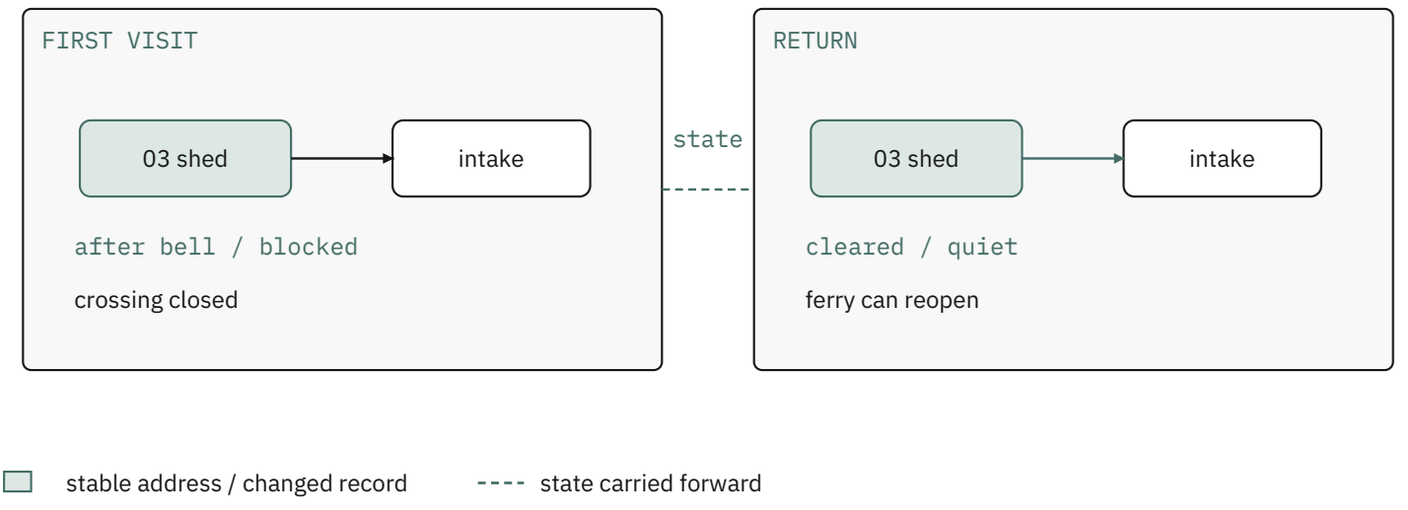
The party returns to the ferry shed after the evening bell. If the intake remains blocked, the crossing stays closed and the knocks continue. If the party cleared it, the keeper can reopen the ferry and the shed sounds different. The return entry carries the earlier intervention forward into both the available route and the arrival description.

The same map can serve both visits because the route geometry stays in place while the state record changes the conditions under which the party can use the crossing after the evening bell. The designer can record an inhabitant's movement or a door's status beside its existing address, keeping the return easy to check against the earlier decision.

The frame below places the first and second visits beside each other, using the same site drawing with a changed caption and route condition. In a longer adventure, those visits might be separated by many pages or sessions. A stable location address keeps the earlier entry easy to find when the referee checks which conditions still apply.

Trace the route from the public notice to the private key, then to the return record. The altered closing time points toward the keeper and the ferry; inspection reveals the blocked intake; clearing it permits the crossing to reopen. Place each of those connections on the surface the referee or players consult at that moment.

second visit / same address, changed state



Original return-state comparison. The site is stable; the crossing condition and sound change according to the recorded intervention.

Original atlas example. Compare explicit restocking guidance [B3 d4] and the distinction between map position and state in the S3 case study.

Design the act of consultation

The module corpus offers several ways to keep a referee in contact with an imagined place while a group makes decisions. Keyed entries supply local conditions, maps support movement at different scales, and rumors give the party an incomplete first account, while separate displays let players inspect a scene as the referee consults its concealed mechanism. Each arrangement changes which information can be found together and who can see it.

The historical design comparisons add ways to organize those consultations. A title image establishes a visual proposition before detail arrives. A grid makes a change in reading width easy to locate, while editorial pacing controls the distance between a picture and the passage that develops it. Grouping related facts shortens the route from a question to the value that answers it. These operations can be carried into a new encounter layout and checked against the task it asks the referee to perform.

The Morrow Pump gathers those operations in a small site. A public notice presents a changed time, a private key connects the sound to its cause, and a return record carries the party's intervention into a later visit. The ink drawings give the shed and the crossing a recognizable material character. Precise diagrams keep the routes, information sources and consequences available for comparison.

Begin a new adventure layout by naming the reader's next action. Preparing a whole location, finding one room, comparing a mechanical value and showing an artifact across the table require different amounts of information and different reading distances. Give each action a surface, then follow the connection to the next one. A ruling may need only a line beside its trigger; a map and its key may need to remain open together.

Carry that sequence into the physical format. Place the map beside the bound key, show the handout across the table and check the smallest label from the referee's seat. A foldout can preserve a broad field while freeing a page for prose; a separate display can stay with the players while the referee consults the book. These handling decisions determine where the reader's hands and attention have to move.

For the Morrow Pump, keep the public notice visible while the party chooses an approach. Hold the key beside the map, record whether the intake has been cleared and use that entry when the party returns after the bell. The same location then carries a different sound and an available crossing because the earlier action remains attached to its address.

Synthesis of the structural survey [L], the twelve module case studies and historical design sources [D01–D08].

Terms used in the atlas

Key	A stable address connecting a location on a map to its written encounter record.
Read-aloud	Information designated for presentation to players, usually on arrival or at a stated trigger.
Referee-facing	Information intended for the person administering the adventure, including hidden causes and procedures.
Player-facing	Information that players may inspect without receiving the private explanation.
Hub-and-spoke	A pattern in which a base supports excursions to several destinations. A hub may itself contain dangers or hidden interests.
Information asymmetry	A difference in what two participants or groups know at a particular moment.
Clue network	A model of discoverable evidence, its sources and the actions or places to which it points.
Escalation	An increase or change in pressure with a specified condition, such as elapsed time, an alarm or a crossed boundary.
Return loop	A route through which an earlier location is revisited; the same geometry may carry changed conditions.
Chassis	The recurring page arrangement of margins, columns, navigation and reading widths.
Threshold image	An image placed at an entry to direct attention before the detailed explanation.
Digital page	A one-based page position in the selected PDF, including covers, inserts and cropped plates.

Module source register

X1 · The Isle of Dread

David Cook, Tom Moldvay. 1983 orange-cover revision. 38 digital pages. Raster scan of the 1983 revised edition. References follow this Archive.org assembly.

https://ia600600.us.archive.org/18/items/tsr09043bx1theisleofdread/tsr09043B%20-%20X1%20-%20The%20Isle%20of%20Dread.pdf

SHA-256 bf86005011f3f04a16614d6fd3a0fc524cb7fb9147e8cfd740bf10c4f4ff9c6f

B2 · The Keep on the Borderlands

Gary Gygax. 1980 / 1981 printing. 35 digital pages. Mixed scan and reconstructed text; inserted references and graph worksheet.

https://iimu.kapsi.fi/limunropellukset/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/7-B2-Keep-on-Borderlands.pdf

SHA-256 c205735f4181aa34f95a9c825e02908d7fc6a9831273409f0a45ba1a6a3fe36a

B3 · Palace of the Silver Princess

Jean Wells. 1981 orange-cover Jean Wells version. 36 digital pages. Digitized original-version layout; varying crop boxes.

https://pandius.com/b3_orig.pdf

SHA-256 9bc609b00752ccf7a5c04250d9982b42117f8d0b1a59dfa586ce731cddac6e42

N1 · Against the Cult of the Reptile God

Douglas Niles. 1982 content. 32 digital pages. Mixed scan/OCR/vector file; separate dungeon-map leaves are absent.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/tsr09063-N1-Against-the-Cult-of-the-Reptile-God.pdf

SHA-256 3bed1d2b653c8e318eb2614c838555cf387a5e21fceaf9dd7fff4ea1eb66096f

All module references use one-based positions in these exact files. Retrieval and independent-check records are retained in the research package.

Module source register

S1 · Tomb of Horrors

Gary Gygax. Original-era adventure in later digital conversion. 47 digital pages. Later PageMaker conversion with live re-typeset text and cropped display leaves.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/TSR09022-S1-Tomb-of-Horrors.pdf

SHA-256 ee9e94ddaacda5ea89fdd6f83f5b1498445e6a85f01d6b26d6411617d8c78b17

S2 · White Plume Mountain

Lawrence Schick. Original-era TSR edition. 20 digital pages. Raster text scans in a later QuarkXPress assembly.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/S2-White-Plume-Mountain.pdf

SHA-256 a75ee94c6559308e657e046b15036b6603948a5269ff14e5224104b53e348b63

C1 · The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan

Harold Johnson, Jeff R. Leason. Original-era TSR edition. 44 digital pages. Acrobat Capture scan; varying crops and mixed orientation.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/tsr09032-C1-The-Hidden-Shrine-of-Tomoachan.pdf

SHA-256 e0bf81c6d4572ff83eea9c3f25dad964bc06fa1913d7acac2927de7acf1ccfbb

I1 · Dwellers of the Forbidden City

David Cook. 1981 content. 36 digital pages. Later fitted live-text reconstruction.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/tsr09046-I1-Dwellers-of-the-Forbidden-City.pdf

SHA-256 7bfe03bafb6ea0f12ed361df678d60c805fbdc9bc733f684c6ad41d90bc7d786

All module references use one-based positions in these exact files. Retrieval and independent-check records are retained in the research package.

Module source register

T1 · The Village of Hommlet

Gary Gygax. 1979 / 1981 green-cover printing. 25 digital pages. Raster original-page scan with black map leaves and a split blue village foldout.

https://raw.githubusercontent.com/Thrahd/DnD_Files/main/T1%20-%20The%20Village%20of%20Hommlet%20-%20%28Green%20Cover%29.pdf

SHA-256 b2d3e921d2131180ead35d2ae116dfd06197556de4fb158a7097e009529f269b

U1 · The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh

Dave J. Browne, Don Turnbull. 1981 content. 38 digital pages. 2001 TOCKA/InDesign reconstruction of the 1981 adventure.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/tsr09062-U1-Sinister-Secret-of-Saltmarsh.pdf

SHA-256 cedff6cc968172d4a257bd25de58dc5a7350f4dd446656c2e0ba3828b06da8ff

C2 · The Ghost Tower of Inverness

Allen Hammack. 1980 red-cover edition. 36 digital pages. Original-page scan with visual aids and sideways character sheets.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/tsr09038-C2-The-Ghost-Tower-of-Inverness.pdf

SHA-256 4b0254ca4804f7974de53af02c13fd4d1989566750b885185fb9da8fcfea0031

S3 · Expedition to the Barrier Peaks

Gary Gygax. 1980 / 1981 black-cover printing. 105 digital pages. 32-page adventure plus maps and 64 individually cropped illustration plates; 105 digital pages in this assembly.

https://xbladerunner.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2023/01/tsr09033-S3-Expedition-to-the-Barrier-Peaks.pdf

SHA-256 6c81eb40f98254d32c7d2731af842338d615d0dd489478ea97a86fe8f0791156

All module references use one-based positions in these exact files. Retrieval and independent-check records are retained in the research package.

Historical design sources

D01 · The Vignelli Canon

Massimo Vignelli; book design with Beatriz Cifuentes. RIT Vignelli Center for Design Studies. RIT-hosted PDF created 2009; later commercial edition commonly dated 2010.

Locators: printed p. 40 / digital p. 21, Grids, Margins, Columns and Modules; printed p. 72 / digital p. 37, Contrasting Type Sizes; printed p. 80 / digital p. 41, Layouts; printed p. 84 / digital p. 43, Sequence

Vignelli describes grids as arrangements of horizontal and vertical divisions chosen for the task, assigns type weights specific functions, and considers both the static spread and the sequence of page turns.

https://www.rit.edu/vignellicenter/sites/rit.edu.vignellicenter/files/documents/The%20Vignelli%20Canon.pdf

D02 · Design and the Play Instinct

Paul Rand. Paul Rand official website. 1965, originally Education of Vision.

Locators: opening argument, paragraphs beginning Through trial and error and Conversely; tangram discussion; paragraph beginning To insure that theoretical study

Rand connects defined design problems with invention in teaching through the tangram and exercises in proportion.

https://www.paulrand.design/writing/articles/1965-design-and-the-play-instinct.html

D03 · The Man With the Golden Arm

Denver Art Museum. Denver Art Museum. undated collection record; accessed 2026-10-24.

Locators: accession 2007.111; introductory object interpretation

Denver Art Museum describes Saul Bass’s poster through its dominant jagged-arm symbol and identifies the work as a lithograph.

https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/object/2007.111

Primary texts and holding-institution records, retrieved 24 October 2026.

Historical design sources

D04 · Saul Bass. Poster for the film The Man with the Golden Arm directed by Otto Preminger. 1955

The Museum of Modern Art. The Museum of Modern Art. 1955 object; undated record.

Locators: object 202.1956

MoMA identifies the poster as a 1955 lithograph by Saul Bass, given by Otto Preminger Productions, United Artists.

https://www.moma.org/collection/works/5665

D05 · The Barnes Foundation Presents Alexey Brodovitch: Astonish Me

The Barnes Foundation. The Barnes Foundation. 2023-11-27.

Locators: paragraphs on Harper’s Bazaar layouts and Ballet, and exhibition highlights

The Barnes Foundation dates Brodovitch’s art direction at Harper’s Bazaar to 1934–1958 and describes varied scale, white space and layered imagery. It dates his ballet photographs to 1935–37 and their publication in Ballet to 1945.

https://www.barnesfoundation.org/press/press-releases/brodovitch-exhibition

D06 · Modern Look: Photography and the American Magazine — Exhibition Checklist

The Jewish Museum. The Jewish Museum, New York. 2021, exhibition April 3–July 11.

Locators: digital pp. 9–10: Brodovitch Ballet photographs; digital p. 22: Charm, January 1954; We Work Too, Charm, August 1950

The Jewish Museum checklist credits Cipe Pineles as art director and Robert Frank as photographer of We Work Too in Charm, August 1950. It identifies individual Brodovitch photographs from Ballet.

https://thejewishmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/20210331_ModernLook_PressChecklist_Screen-1.pdf

Primary texts and holding-institution records, retrieved 24 October 2026.

Historical design sources

D07 · Cipe Pineles

RIT Cary Graphic Arts Collection. Rochester Institute of Technology. undated collection page; accessed 2026-10-24.

Locators: paragraphs beginning In 1947 and In 1950

RIT records Pineles’s appointment as art director of Seventeen in 1947 and her commissions for fiction illustration. At Charm she worked with Helen Valentine for a readership of working women.

https://www.rit.edu/carycollection/cipe-pineles

D08 · Sutnar, Ladislav, Collection: Finding Aid

Ryerson and Burnham Archives. The Art Institute of Chicago. undated current PDF; accessed 2026-10-24.

Locators: digital p. 2, Historical Note; digital p. 6, Box.FF 1.20 and 1.22a

The finding aid records Sutnar’s Sweet’s collaboration with Knud Lönberg-Holm, binder tabs, indexing and double spreads. It lists the 1944 and 1950 books and the 30 April 1942 catalog-redesign memo.

https://artic.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/api/collection/findingaids/id/27893/download

D09 · Cooper-Hewitt Awarded 2013 Ladislav Sutnar Prize

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Smithsonian Institution. 2013-11-14.

Locators: paragraph describing Sweet’s Catalog Service

Cooper Hewitt dates Sutnar’s art direction at Sweet’s to 1941–1960 and describes his technical information design.

https://www.cooperhewitt.org/2013/11/14/cooper-hewitt-awarded-2013-ladislav-sutnar-prize/

Primary texts and holding-institution records, retrieved 24 October 2026.

Historical design sources

D10 · Cooper Hewitt to Present Special Exhibition How Posters Work

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Smithsonian Institution. 2015-02-05.

Locators: opening description of principles of composition, perception and storytelling

Cooper Hewitt’s exhibition, organized by Ellen Lupton, examines composition, perception and storytelling through poster examples.

https://www.cooperhewitt.org/2015/02/05/cooper-hewitt-to-present-special-exhibition-how-posters-work/

Primary texts and holding-institution records, retrieved 24 October 2026.

The structural archive and the evidence trail

[L] The Structure Under the Page: TSR module layout study. Visual study completed 23 October 2026 and archived 24 October 2026. The collection contains a twenty-page theory guide, sixty blank structural masters, a 492-record page inventory and editable SVG/JSON files.

The inventory records columns, text fields, boxes, map reserves, statistics areas, handouts and other visible page arrangements in twelve selected PDFs. The blank masters normalize those arrangements into reusable geometry. T29 combines four display reserves; T45 supplies a generic branching diagram.

The module studies cite the selected files by digital-page position. The source register records each file’s author, edition, page count, URL and SHA-256 hash. The narrative research ledger contains 68 claim entries tied to specific digital pages.

The selected S1 file uses later typesetting; I1 contains fitted live text; U1 is a 2001 reconstruction. S3 includes 64 individually cropped illustration plates, and the N1 file lacks the separated dungeon-map leaves. X1 is the 1983 orange-cover revision. These edition details accompany the entries in the module source register.

The historical design references include designer-authored texts and records from museums, libraries and archives. Each essay names the author or institution responsible for the cited account and develops a page-design application from that account.

Illustrations and placement

Fourteen original ink illustrations accompany the atlas. Each entry identifies its placement.

cover	page 1
hub	page 19
snail	page 21
rumors	page 23
hidden	page 25
return	page 27
clues	page 29
scales	page 31
threshold	page 33
depth	page 35
timer	page 37
strata	page 39
device	page 41
morrow pump	page 53

The illustrations were generated for this edition from original scene briefs. Thirty-four vector diagrams map routes, information, page divisions and changing conditions. Their numbered keys and legends connect each figure to the adjacent analysis.

Index of patterns and cases

Audience boundary 9, 27, 41, 55, 56

Blank stocking fields 17, 27

Branching 13, 29, 35, 41

Clue networks 15, 23, 25, 57

Columns and grids 7, 44, 49

Display and handouts 12, 37, 39, 41, 55

Escalation and time 16, 37, 39, 41

Graphic designers 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49

Hub-and-spoke 14, 19, 21, 23

Image placement 12, 46, 47, 48, 69

Information asymmetry 9, 15, 23, 25, 41

Keyed encounters 8, 10, 33, 56

Maps and scale 11, 31, 29, 54

Morrow Pump 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58

Outliers and source editions 6, 17, 68

Return loops 14, 27, 58

Rumors 15, 19, 27, 57

Spatial storytelling 8, 11, 31, 33

Statistics and tables 10, 49

Tournament scope 29, 37, 39

Module names and their opening pages also appear in Contents. The PDF outline provides direct access to every page.

Edition and production

Revised review edition, 24 October 2026. The atlas contains 71 pages, twelve module studies, six design essays, the Morrow Pump worked example, fourteen illustrations and thirty-four vector diagrams.

The portrait layout measures 9 × 11.5 inches. Libre Bodoni sets the display headings, IBM Plex Sans the body text and IBM Plex Mono the labels. The PDF embeds these fonts and includes chapter bookmarks and source links.

Editable JSON files hold the chapter prose, captions and reference entries. The Python layout source sets the page composition; original image files and vector drawing instructions remain separate. The Markdown manuscript and web edition carry the same revised text.

The production record contains source checks, page renders, type sizes, image placement measurements and SHA-256 hashes for the archived files. A physical proof at the intended trim, stock and binding is pending.

For a correction, identify the atlas page and the passage, with a source digital page or historical record where applicable. The module and design registers provide the references used in this edition.