Intro to Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition

Summary of the Game

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) is a tabletop role playing game that usually involves 3-5 players playing characters (referred to as PCs), and an additional player who acts as the Dungeon Master (or DM), who acts as the game's primary storyteller and rules arbiter.

In D&D, the DM provides the setting and incentive for interacting with the world, and the players make decisions in the world through their characters. Together, everyone helps tell a story with the goal of creating an immersive, enjoyable gaming experience.

The Goal

There is no single goal that is shared by every D&D game. There is no "winning" D&D in the final sense of completing a single objective, as there is in many games. While there may be many significant goals the players wish to complete during a game, such as uncovering a conspiracy, saving a city from the clutches of the Nine Hells, or ending a prolonged, magically-induced winter that is slowly freezing the life out of a region, every game is different.

Ultimately, D&D is just about having fun, and the only real goal is to help create a good time for everyone at the table (or on the video call).

Playing

In D&D, players play characters who each have unique traits and abilities, and who develop and improve over time by gaining levels. While the game presents rules and mechanics that formalize gameplay, these should be thought of as guides rather than limits. Playing D&D is more an exercise in inhabiting a personality than in remembering and exploiting a set of constraints.

The open-ended play style of D&D can be overwhelming so some, so if you don't have access to the Player's Handbook (the book that describes the game's rules in detail) here is a brief breakdown of D&D's rules:
- Characters interact with the world via actions, bonus actions (if available), and movement
- Whenever the outcome of a character's behavior is uncertain, players roll dice
    - dice rolls are adjusted by various factors, such as the character's abilities, the environment, etc

- When keeping track of the order of character actions is especially important (e.g. during combat encounters), players each make an "Initiative roll" prior to the encounter to determine the order of play

Ultimately, don't worry about the rules too much -- let the DM do that! The DM has the right to adjust rules or make exceptions to improve the quality of the game and its enjoyment by the players. Simply asking yourself "what would my character do in this situation" can help you decide what to do in the game.

Things Any Character Can Do

- **Talk!** Ask questions, bluff, bribe, extort, cajole, or comfort; the possibilities are limitless
- **Use a skill:** set a trap, pick someone's pocket, evaluate the local architecture -- let your character's skills be your guide
- **Search:** there are always hidden things to find that the DM may not describe unless you ask
- **Attack:** for when talking fails! If the characters are not already in a combat encounter, attacking another character or creature may prompt an Initiative roll by each character involved
- **Cast a spell:** many characters have a list of spells they can cast that may allow them to do anything from opening a door to sending a message to shooting a fireball
- **Hide:** sometimes getting out of sight is the right answer
- **Move or Dash:** your character can move up to their speed once per turn; Dashing requires an Action and lets the character move up to twice their speed
- **Disengage:** if in combat, this allows you to escape an enemy's range of attack without exposing yourself to an Attack of Opportunity
- **Dodge:** this action makes you harder to hit in combat
- **Help:** this action allows you to make someone else's chance of success in an action more likely
- **Ready:** this action lets you wait for a particular circumstance before making a reaction
- **Use an Object:** you may pick up strange or powerful items during your adventures -- use them!