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### WRITING SAMPLE

Orientation Challenge in Dungeons and Dragons, [Strixhaven: Curriculum of Chaos](#), “Chapter 3: School is in Session,” by Sydney Adams

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When the characters enter the Hall of Oracles to begin orientation, read or paraphrase the following:

An almost sacrosanct sense of calm descends as you step into the Hall of Oracles.

“Brilliant scholars,” says a rich, soothing voice radiating from the hall’s central snarl of glowing energy. “Your attention, please. As you are now Strixhaven University students, this storied Biblioplex will be your second home for research, studies, and even leisure. There is just one task to accomplish before you officially embark on your academic journey—a scavenger hunt!”

A small parchment materializes in front of the characters. It presents a list of clues.

“The rules are simple,” the voice says. “Each clue on this list will lead you to a different location in the Biblioplex. Simply travel to the area each clue references and perform the action the clue suggests. Time is of the essence. You have only until the end of the day to finish your hunt. Solve as many clues as you can, because at each location, you may win a prize! Now then, off you go!”

### Scavenger Hunt Clues

A character can win a prize for each clue they solve but can receive only one item in each place. If a character tries to redo a clue to receive a second item, the magic that reveals the item doesn’t work again. Here are the clues:

**Clue 1.** You’ll forget all about any trouble or plight when you step forward and are *ensnarled* in light.

**Clue 2.** Alumni commission works when they retire, seeking promising mages to inspire.

**Clue 3.** Each group deserves a free treat for their investment. Serve up this list and enjoy your refreshment.

**Clue 4.** These leafy beds aren’t always what they seem. Give them a pat and see what you glean.

**Clue 5.** Some stars are ancient, enduring, and bright. But others—maybe you!—are born on opening night.

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Each clue can be unraveled either by deduction, or with a successful DC 10 Intelligence ([Investigation](#)) check. A decoded clue points the characters toward one of the areas of the Biblioplex as well as the action they must take to receive a prize in that area.

## Running the Hunt

Explain the Biblioplex's areas in detail before the characters begin this scavenger hunt, so they have an idea of which areas the clues point to. Have the characters begin the scavenger hunt with the first clue, since it points to the room they're already standing in. The players can then complete the other clues in any order they wish.

### Clue 1: Hall of Oracles

This clue refers the characters to the room they start the orientation in ([area B11](#)).

If a character touches the pooled energy below the snarl, they momentarily lose track of their body, overwhelmed by the snarl's magical power. The character automatically disengages from the snarl and discovers that they are holding a [potion of healing](#).

### Clue 2: Student Art Gallery

This clue refers to the Student and Alumni Art Gallery in [area B12](#).

When the characters wander through the gallery, they see a portrait of several older alumni wearing Prismari College robes. If a character examines the portrait, they find a plaque that reads: "At Strixhaven we were all inspired." Below the plaque is a small lever. If a character uses an action to pull the lever, a box pops out of the wall containing a [Strixhaven pennant](#) (see [chapter 2](#)) for each character in the party. Once it dispenses the pennants, the box disappears back into the wall and doesn't work for the characters again.

### Clue 3: Biblioplex Café

This clue refers to the Biblioplex Café in [area B6](#).

When the characters enter the café, they see several students enjoying drinks and snacks. Aisla Fitzbottom (chaotic good gnome [commoner](#)), the café manager, is a Strixhaven staff member and the only worker behind the counter at present. The characters must present their scavenger hunt list to Aisla. When they do, she tells them to come behind the counter and help her quickly restock the café's sandwiches and baked goods from several modified [Heward's handy haversacks](#).

If a character goes above and beyond in their assistance with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check, Aisla gives that character a random trinket from [chapter 2](#). Many

students have ignored her requests for help during the orientation, she says, so she decides to make an exception with a gift from her own pockets. Plus, she likes the new students' ambition.

#### **Clue 4: Book Garden**

This clue refers to the book gardens of [area B9](#).

When the characters enter a book garden, they see a lush arboretum. A successful DC 10 Intelligence ([Investigation](#)) check reveals that three of the shrubs are not ordinary greenery, but are instead [awakened shrubs](#), each with a glistening crown of leaves. If a character uses an action to pat the shrubs on these leaves, the branches part to reveal a [cuddly Strixhaven mascot](#) (see [chapter 2](#)), representing a random mascot. This magic works only once per character.

#### **Clue 5: Amphitheater**

This clue refers to the amphitheater in [area B13](#).

When the characters reach the amphitheater, they see an impressively lavish stage, with the curtains drawn back as if to reveal performers on the opening night of a major production. If a character recites, sings, hums, belches, or otherwise emits any line or tune while standing on the stage, bright floodlights snap on around the stage's perimeter—a number of lights equal to the number of characters in the group. Approaching any of the lights reveals a recess in which lies a [hooded lantern](#) filled with oil.

#### **That Trunk Has Teeth!**

Once the characters have completed as much of the scavenger hunt as they wish, they hear a commotion coming from the west shelves of the main stacks in [area B10](#). Read or paraphrase the following:

The joyous and energetic atmosphere of the first floor is shattered by panicked shouting.

“That trunk!” a young elf screams, pointing toward the stacks as she runs by. “That trunk has teeth! Please, anyone, stop it!”

Chaos erupts in the library as students stream in all directions, their books and papers flying as they shout in fear. The only faculty mages in sight are trying to deal with panicked students. You can't just let some monster ruin the first day of classes. Time to step up!

In the western part of [area B8](#), the characters see a half dozen old trunks strewn about. Sheets, blankets, large wooden frames, and half-painted wooden props are scattered haphazardly around the tables where members of the Live-Action Roleplaying Guild were setting up for a show. Rampaging throughout the mess is a trunk that has been transformed into a [mimic](#), which attacks the characters as soon as they enter the area. Because the mimic is only temporarily animated, it has the following changes to its stat block:

- It has 30 hit points.
- It has disadvantage on attack rolls.

Once it's defeated, the mimic turns back into an ordinary trunk.

### Ending the Threat

If all the characters fall [unconscious](#) during the fight, Professor Mavinda Sharpbeak (neutral good owlin [Silverquill professor of radiance](#); see [chapter 7](#)) arrives on the scene at the start of the next round and finishes off the mimic. If the characters defeat the mimic, Professor Sharpbeak arrives on the scene shortly after the group dispatches it. She carries a bag of [potions of healing](#), which she administers to any injured or [unconscious](#) characters.

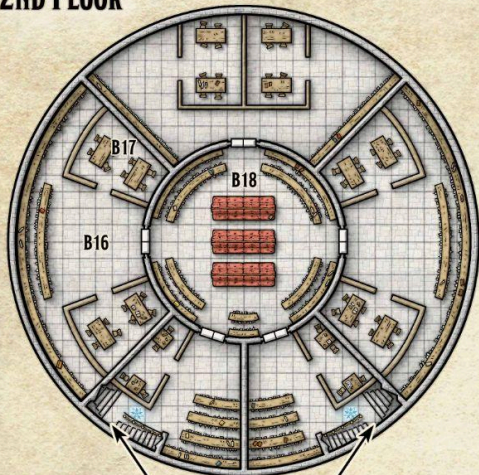
A guidance counselor at Strixhaven, Professor Sharpbeak was overseeing the orientation activities, but the mass of fleeing students prevented her from responding to the incident immediately. When she has assisted any wounded characters, she introduces herself.

“Students, well done!” Professor Sharpbeak exclaims, ruffling her feathers with pride. “Such bravery in this incoming class! And what a bizarre occurrence. I can’t remember any of those old costume trunks ever bearing a hint of magic—let alone that manner of transmutation. I will be having a word with the equipment managers over at the Rose Stage. They’re supposed to keep this sort of thing from happening!”

If the characters chat with the professor, she reassures them that this was an unfortunate incident—but sadly, not an unheard-of one, since strange monsters often find their way onto campus. Still, it’s nothing to worry about. Before she goes, she reaches into her bag and gives each character 1 platinum piece, thanking them again for their help and welcoming them to campus.

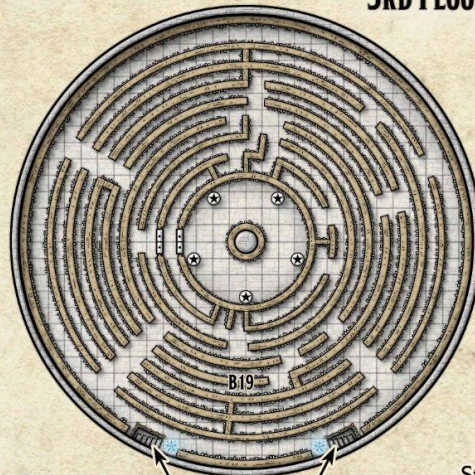
# THE BIBLIOPLEX

2ND FLOOR



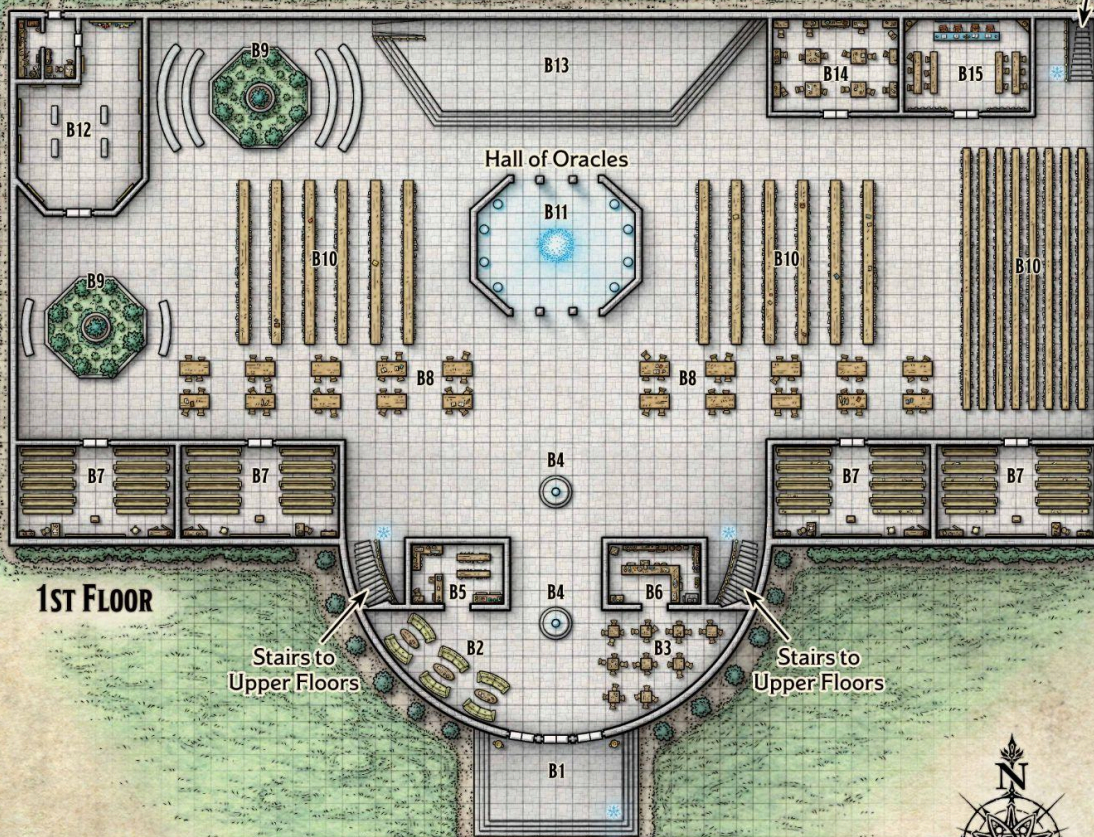
Stairs to Upper and Lower Floors

3RD FLOOR



Stairs to Lower Floors

Stairs to Scriptoria Collections



1ST FLOOR

Stairs to Upper Floors

Stairs to Upper Floors



1 square = 5 feet