

## **Dungeons and Dragons 101**

### **Brief History:**

Dungeons & Dragons (abbreviated as D&D or DnD) is a fantasy tabletop role-playing game (TTRPG) originally designed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson. It was first published in 1974 by Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. (TSR). It has been published by Wizards of the Coast (now a subsidiary of Hasbro) since 1997. D&D's publication is commonly recognized as the beginning of modern role-playing games and the role-playing game industry.

There have been many changes and editions to the original publication, but by far the most popular is the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (5e). The 5<sup>th</sup> Edition was released in 2014, and since its release there have been over twenty other Dungeon & Dragons books published.

### **What is D&D?**

The game itself is a cooperative adventure with a constantly progressing story. While every player gets a piece of the action, the Dungeon Master (DM) is the one who holds it all together. The DM guides the game and story by presenting challenges and organizing the overall narrative. They also make sure everyone follows the rules.

If you're not the DM, you're a player, and your character is a player character, or PC for short. PCs evolve through the campaign based on the decisions they make and what they learn. Each PC has specific characteristics and attributes that will affect those decisions – like extra firepower, a keen mind or an overarching desire to do good – but your decisions as a player will also affect how your character's skills are used, and how they grow or diminish.

As you play, the DM will grant your character experience points based on how you contribute to the campaign. Your character will grow and change as you use these points to level up, or earn stronger stats and better skills.

### **Most Popular Books to Learn More:**

The Player's Handbook (5<sup>th</sup> edition)

The Monster Manual

The Dungeon Master's Guide

\*Your Library can also get these for you!

## Let's Begin!

### Rolling a Character

To start out, every player must create a character. You can basically be whoever you want to be, but think about *who* you want to *play as*. Do you want to be a High Elf Paladin who wants to save the innocent or a Dwarf Rogue who just wants to have some fun? It's up to you.

### **First: Pick Your Race**

Your race is what you were born as. Each race has its own set of skills and abilities. Pick the **one** that speaks to you, or the one you think sounds the best.

**Dwarf** - Bold and hardy, dwarves are known as skilled warriors, miners, and workers of stone and metal.

Traits: +2 Constitution, Darkvision, Dwarven Resilience, Dwarven Combat Training, Stonecutting. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/dwarf>

**Elf** - Elves are a magical people of otherworldly grace, living in the world but not entirely part of it.

Traits: +2 Dexterity, Darkvision, Keen Senses, Fey Ancestry, Trance. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/elf>

**Gnome** - A gnome's energy and enthusiasm for living shines through every inch of their tiny body.

Traits: +2 Intelligence, Darkvision, Gnome Cunning. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/gnome>

**Half-Elf** - Half-elves combine what some say are the best qualities of their elf and human parents.

Traits: +2 Charisma, +1 to two other Ability Scores, Darkvision, Fey Ancestry, Skill Versatility. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/half-elf>

**Halfling** - The diminutive halflings survive in a world full of larger creatures by avoiding notice or barring that avoiding offense.

Traits: +2 Dexterity, Lucky, Brave, Halfling Nimbleness. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/halfling>

**Half-Orc** – Half-orcs’ grayish pigmentation sloping foreheads, jutting jaws, prominent teeth, and towering builds make their orcish heritage plain for all to see.

Traits: +2 Strength, +1 Constitution, Darkvision, Menacing, Relentless Endurance, Savage Attacks. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/half-orc>

**Human**- Humans are the most adaptable and ambitious people among the common races. Whatever drives them, humans are the innovators and pioneers of the worlds.

Traits: +1 to all Ability Scores, Extra Language. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/human>

**Tiefling**- To be greeted with stares and whispers, to suffer violence and insult on the street, to see mistrust and fear in every eye: this is the lot of the tiefling. Tieflings have large horns on their heads and thick long tails. Their teeth are sharp like a canine’s and their skin ranges in a variety of colors.

Traits: +2 Charisma, +1 Intelligence, Darkvision, Hellish Resistance, Infernal Legacy. For more information: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/races/tiefling>

## **Second: Pick Your Class**

Your class is kind of like your job; it’s what you do and who you are. Each class will further decide your skills and abilities.

**Barbarian** - A fierce warrior of primitive background who can enter a battle rage.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d12 / Primary Ability: Strength / Saves: Strength and Constitution

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/barbarian>

**Bard** - An inspiring magician whose power echoes the music of creation.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d8 / Primary Ability: Charisma / Saves: Charisma and Dexterity

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/bard>

**Cleric** - A priestly champion who wields divine magic in service of a higher power.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d8 / Primary Ability: Wisdom / Saves: Charisma and Wisdom

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/cleric>

**Druid** -A priest of the old faith, wielding the powers of nature and adopting animal forms.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d8 / Primary Ability: Wisdom / Saves: Wisdom and Intelligence

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/druid>

**Fighter** - A master of martial combat, skilled with a variety of weapons.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d10 / Primary Ability: Strength or Dexterity / Saves: Strength and Constitution

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/fighter>

**Monk** - A master of martial arts, harnessing the power of the body in pursuit of physical spiritual perfection.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d8 / Primary Ability: Dexterity and Wisdom / Saves: Strength and Dexterity

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/monk>

**Paladin** - A holy warrior bound to a sacred oath.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d10 / Primary Ability: Charisma and Strength / Saves: Charisma and Wisdom

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/paladin>

**Ranger** - A warrior who combats threats on the edges of civilization

Basic Info: Hit Die: d10 / Primary Ability: Dexterity and Wisdom / Saves: Dexterity and Strength

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/ranger>

**Rogue** - A scoundrel who uses stealth and trickery to overcome obstacles and enemies.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d8 / Primary Ability: Dexterity / Saves: Dexterity and Intelligence

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/rogue>

**Sorcerer** - A spellcaster who draws on inherent magic from a gift or bloodline.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d6 / Primary Ability: Charisma / Saves: Charisma and Constitution

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/sorcerer>

**Warlock** - A wielder of magic that is derived from a bargain with an extraplanar entity.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d8 / Primary Ability: Charisma / Saves: Charisma and Wisdom

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/warlock>

**Wizard** - A scholarly magic user capable of manipulating the structures of reality.

Basic Info: Hit Die: d6 / Primary Ability: Intelligence / Saves: Wisdom and Intelligence

More info: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/classes/wizard>

### **Third: Pick Your Alignment**

Lawful – Law is the equivalent of good. In any given situation, a character with a lawful alignment will predictably put the safety and goals of the group first.

Chaotic – Chaos is the opposite of lawful. A chaotically-aligned character will make choices based on furthering his or her own goals, without any regard for the group.

Neutral – Neutral alignments are neither "good" or "bad," the neutral character will fight for the group if that will help him or her survive and achieve his or her goal or take off in retreat if need be.

\*Think of alignments like this: how do you think your character would use a bookmark?

## bookmark alignment chart



## Finally: Determining your Ability Scores (It's math time!)

Each of your character's abilities has a score assigned to it, a number that defines the magnitude of that ability. An ability score is not just a measure of innate capabilities, but also encompasses your character's training and competence in activities related to that ability. What you are good in is determined by your race and class, so you would want to put a higher number in those skills to make sure your character can (hopefully) perform an action well when the time comes.

### Terms you should know first:

#### Core Abilities:

**Strength** – how much stuff a character can carry and how much physical damage that character can inflict / measuring physical power

**Wisdom** – intuitiveness / perception

**Dexterity** – nimbleness, both in using a weapon and in slinking around unnoticed, measuring agility

**Intelligence** – the capacity for learning new things, reasoning and memory

**Constitution** – a character's stamina and toughness / measuring endurance

**Charisma** – likability / force of personality, which comes in handy in avoiding fights and making friends

#### Determinants:

**Armor Class:** a number that represents how difficult a character is to hit. It is determined based on the literal armor you are wearing.

**Hit Points:** a number that represents how much damage a character can withstand before dying. These are determined by your class.

**Base Scores:** This tells you how good you are at something. We will be using the “standard set” of base scores during this program, which are: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8. For a baseline: 10 is average, anything below 10 is less than average, anything above 10 is better than average.

**Modifiers:** These are determined by your base scores. These are numbers you use most often when performing a task, they are added to whatever number you roll on a die. You do this because you need to adjust for random luck and how good your character is at something. For example: If your base score is 15 in Wisdom, your modifier would be +2. For example, if you wanted to do a Perception check to see if you can tell if someone is eavesdropping on your conversation, you would roll a d20 and add whatever that number was with your modifier to see how well you are able to perceive if someone is eavesdropping nearby.

**Proficiencies:** How proficient you are is based on your level. It is used during your ability checks and attack rolls. For example: As a level 1 player your proficiency would be +2.

Each ability covers a broad range of capabilities, including skills that a character or a monster can be proficient in. If you do not see a skill here that you would like to perform, the DM decides which core abilities’ modifier number you should use.

For example:

Strength

Athletics

Dexterity

Acrobatics

Sleight of Hand

Stealth

Intelligence

Arcana

History

Investigation

Nature

Religion

Wisdom

Animal Handling

Insight

Medicine

Perception

Survival

Charisma

Deception  
Intimidation  
Performance  
Persuasion

For more on ability scores go to:

<https://www.dndbeyond.com/sources/basic-rules/using-ability-scores>

### **A Few Last Thing About Making Characters**

#### **Name**

You can basically name your character anything you want. You can be a dwarf named Fenwir or an elf named Lily. But if you would like help picking a name based on your character's race you can use this name generator:

<https://www.fantasynamegenerators.com/dungeons-and-dragons.php>

#### **Age**

Depending on your character's race, you can be almost any age you want. Humans in DnD have the same lifespan as we do, so you can be a human aged 16, or you could play an elf aged 120 because they live longer.

#### **Background**

Usually backgrounds help you develop your character and give it depth, but they can also give you an extra skill. There are many different backgrounds to be found in the Player's Handbook.

For simplicity, we will just be allowing you to just pick one extra skill as long as it fits the character you are creating. For more on backgrounds and what they are you can always check the Player's Handbook.

### **Now on to "The Dice and How to Use Them with your Ability Scores!"**

**(This is the most important part!!)**

Dice is how you do things in DnD. They determine if you can do the thing or not, and what happens after the thing is done or not.



The game uses polyhedral dice with different numbers of sides. In these rules, the different dice are referred to by the letter d followed by the number of sides: d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20. For instance, a d6 is a six-sided die (the typical cube that many games use).

When you need to roll dice, the rules tell you how many dice to roll of a certain type, as well as what modifiers to add. For example, “3d8 + 5” means you roll three eight-sided dice (or just roll an eight-sided die three times), add them together, and add 5 to the total.

Most rolls are performed with a d20. Rolling a 20 is an automatic success, while rolling a 1 is an automatic fail. Depending on what an action’s Difficulty Class (DC) this will determine how well you did the action or not.

**Saving Throws:** Are rolls you make in response to certain situations. For example: you step on a trap and have to roll a d20 and add your Dexterity modifier to see if the trap gets you or not. Your proficiency in saving throws is determined by your class.

**Attacks:** There are many different types of attacks, but there are 4 main types. Mostly these attacks will be dependent on your dexterity or strength and dependent on your weapon of choice. Spells/ magic is based on your spell casting modifier, which is determined by your class.

Melee Weapon- Examples are swords, daggers, clubs. You are directly hitting someone very close to you with a weapon and/ or fists.

Ranged Weapon- Examples: Longbow, short bow, crossbow. You are hitting someone from farther away.

Melee Spell- Examples: spells that require touch. You are using magic to hit someone that very close to you.

Range Spell- Example: spells from far away. You are using magic to hit someone farther away.

Okay...now that that is all out of the way, let’s roll!