

D&D RULES BASICS

ABILITY SCORES

A character's basic Abilities are **Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom** and **Charisma**. Each has a **Score** between 3 and 20, which translates into a **modifier** of -4 to +5. The modifier is added to the number on the dice, making it higher or lower.

PROFICIENCY BONUS

Characters can have **proficiency** with *skills, tools, weapons, armour, languages* and *saving throws*. If you make a roll involving a proficiency, you usually add a **proficiency bonus** to represent training or expertise. This bonus is +2 for a new character at level 1.

ROLLING THE DICE

There are three main kinds of dice rolls: **ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws**. These always use a twenty-sided dice (d20 for short). The **result** of a roll is the number on the dice, plus a relevant modifier. If the result is *equal to or higher than* the **Difficulty Class (DC)** set by the Dungeon Master (DM) or specified in the rules, you succeed. If it's lower, you fail, or succeed with a setback or a cost.

Other dice are mostly rolled to determine **damage, healing** or the effects of magic.

ADVANTAGE/DISADVANTAGE

If you have **advantage**, roll two d20s and choose one. If you have **disadvantage**, roll two d20s - you have to use the worst one (usually the lowest).

You can't have advantage or disadvantage more than once. If you have both at the same time, they cancel each other out; just roll one d20.

ROUND FRACTIONS DOWN

If a rule says to divide a number, always **round fractions down** to a whole number.

SPECIFIC EXCEPTIONS

If a race, class, equipment, spell or something else specific to your character says something different to the general rules, use the specific rule instead.



Dice, from top to bottom: a d20, d12, d10 (the zero counts as 10), d8, d6 and d4. 6s and 9s are underlined to make them clear.

TYPES OF ROLLS

ABILITY CHECKS

This roll "checks" if you succeed at a task. The DM will tell you the DC and which ability to use, as well as any skill or tool proficiency that applies. e.g. kicking down a door might be a Strength (Athletics) check. Add your **Ability modifier** to the roll, plus your **proficiency bonus** if you have the relevant proficiency.

ATTACK ROLLS

This is an attempt to hit an opponent in combat. The DC for an attack roll is the Armour Class (AC) of your target. Melee and thrown weapon attacks add your **Strength modifier**; ranged and finesse weapon attacks add your **Dexterity modifier**. Add your **proficiency bonus** if you are proficient with the weapon, usually determined by your character's class.

Some spells require a **spell attack roll**; these add your **spellcasting ability modifier** (determined by your class) and **proficiency bonus**.

If you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, you always miss. If you roll a 20 on the d20 (a "natural 20"), you always hit, and it's a **critical hit** (or "crit"; see below).

DAMAGE ROLLS

When you **hit** with an attack, you usually make a **damage roll** to see how much damage you dealt. A weapon or spell specifies the number and size of dice to roll, and the *damage type*. Roll all the dice and add the results together.

Weapons also add your **Strength** or **Dexterity modifier** to the damage roll, whichever you used for the attack roll. (Don't add your proficiency bonus.) Spells don't usually add modifiers to damage rolls.

On a **critical hit**, roll double the normal number of damage dice. (Only add modifiers once.)

On your character sheet, a damage roll is written like this: "**2d6+3 sl**". This means roll two six-sided dice, add their results, then add another 3. The "sl" is shorthand for the damage type - in this case, slashing damage.

Damage types are important when a creature has **resistance** (they take half the normal damage), **vulnerability** (double the damage) or even **immunity** (take no damage) to certain damage types.

SAVING THROWS ("SAVES" FOR SHORT)

This is an attempt to avoid or reduce a harmful effect. The source - usually a spell, trap or special attack - will specify which Ability Score to use, what the DC is, and what happens if you succeed or fail. Add your **Ability modifier** to the roll, and your **proficiency bonus** if you're proficient in saves for that Ability, which is determined by your class.

TIPS FOR ROLLS

REQUIRED LEARNING

The DM may decide some tasks are impossible to even try unless you have a relevant proficiency. For example, you can't pick a lock if you don't know how to use Thieves' Tools, or recognise an obscure god's symbol if you haven't studied Religion.

ROLLING AGAIN

If you fail a roll, the Dungeon Master decides whether you can try the same thing again; you can't always keep rolling until you get lucky! But don't give up. Try to think of a different way to solve the problem.

HELPING OTHERS

You can usually help someone do something, giving them advantage on their roll. It has to make sense that you can help them, though, and you may have to have a relevant proficiency.

YOUR CHARACTER SHEET

Take some time to look over your character sheet and learn where everything is. On the standard sheet, abilities, saving throws and skills are on the left; combat information is in the middle column; and special rules for your character are on the right. If you can cast spells, they'll be in the combat section and/or a separate page.

Bonuses for saving throws, skills, attacks and damage are usually written as the total bonus to add to your roll; e.g. if you have a Wisdom modifier of +2 and are proficient in the Perception skill, write +4 in the space next to Perception. **Use a pencil** as these values will change as you gain experience and level up!