

# Dungeons and Dragons Quick Rules Summary

## Abilities

Abilities are your innate talents—what you're good at (or not so good at) in a broad sense. Along with race and class, abilities are the core attributes of your character. They influence most actions in the game.

In most player characters, ability scores range from 1 to 20. Human average is 10; scores for 90% of humans fall between 6 and 14. If you have a Strength of 16, for instance, you're very strong.

Each ability has an ability modifier. With high abilities this is a bonus, with low scores it is a penalty. With that Strength of 16, you get a +3 bonus when attempting an action that relies on physical power.

Ability Descriptions	Score	Modifier
<b>Strength</b> Hand-to-hand combat; physical power.	1 2-3	-5 -4
<b>Dexterity</b> Ranged combat and agility.	4-5 6-7	-3 -2
<b>Constitution</b> Toughness and health.	8-9 10-11 (normal)	-1 +0
<b>Intelligence</b> Memory and cleverness.	12-13 14-15	+1 +2
<b>Wisdom</b> Intuition and willpower.	16-17 18-19	+3 +4
<b>Charisma</b> Charm and persuasiveness.	20-21 <i>And so on.</i>	+5

## Race

Race indicates your character's species. Nonhuman races each have different strengths and weaknesses, including ability bonuses and special abilities. Humans have no special abilities but are the most flexible; they get extra skills and feats and can most easily switch classes.

- **Human:** You know, human.
- **Elf:** Thin, fair, exotic, magical.
- **Dwarf:** Short, stout, tough, magic-resistant.
- **Gobber:** Short, ugly, nimble, inventive.
- **Ogrun:** Big, strong, ugly, tough.
- **Trollkin:** Even bigger, even stronger, even uglier, even tougher.

## Class

Class is what you do. Fighters train for combat and warfare. Wizards study magic. Rogues look for the quickest way to make some gold (or achieve some other goal). Clerics serve and fight for their gods.

Several core classes are the most common, but there are countless others. You can even have multiple classes as you gain experience.

Each class has its own special abilities.

- **Arcane mechanik:** A magical scientist.
- **Barbarian:** A dangerous berserker.
- **Bard:** A magically inspiring performer.
- **Bodger:** A mechanical fix-it expert.
- **Cleric:** A warrior priest with divine magic.
- **Druid:** A worshipper of nature with divine magic.
- **Fell caller:** A trollkin warrior.
- **Fighter:** A professional soldier.
- **Gun mage:** A magician who channels spells through a pistol.
- **Monk:** An ascete dedicated to self improvement and defense.
- **Paladin:** A champion of truth and justice.
- **Rogue:** A skilled scoundrel or jack-of-all trades.
- **Scout:** An expert wilderness fighter.
- **Sorcerer:** A magician with innate, unstudied talent.
- **Wizard:** A dedicated student of magic.

## Level

Level is a broad measure of experience and power. You have a level in each class, called your class level. Then you have an overall character level, which is all your class levels added together. So if you're a 4th-level fighter and a 2nd-level wizard, your character level is 6th.

Characters start at 1st level, and in most game settings very few non-player characters are higher than 4th or 5th level.

You go up in level by gaining experience points. You get experience points for overcoming challenges in the game.

## Hit Points

Hit points (hp) represent how hard it is to seriously hurt you. With a lot of hit points it takes many dangerous attacks to do you real harm. With each new level you get more hit points. How many you get depends on your class.

## Skills

Skills are areas where you've trained and learned to do specific useful things. Different classes have different skills; fighters and wizards tend to have few skills because they focus on combat and magic so heavily. Rogues, being jacks of all trades, have lots of skills, mostly focusing on stealth and trickery.

Skills are measured in ranks. With one or two ranks you've had a little bit of training but that's all. With five or more ranks you're quite accomplished. With ten or more ranks you're an expert.

To use a skill, you make a roll called a skill check. (See below.)

## Feats

Feats are special talents and abilities. Feats aren't measured in ranks; either you have a feat or you don't. Typically a feat gives you a bonus to some roll—you don't roll for the feat itself. Most characters have very few feats, so make sure yours really fit your strengths and interests.

Combat-oriented feats make you better at particular aspects of fighting—Weapon Focus gives you a bonus with a particular weapon, Two-Weapon Fighting makes you better at fighting with a weapon in each hand, Point-Blank Shot makes you more accurate up close, and so on.

Weapon and armor proficiency feats enable you to use different weapons and armor without a penalty.

Non-combat feats make you better at using certain skills, or make you better at using magic.

## Alignment

Alignment indicates how you tend to treat others and how you respond to rules and regulations. There are two main axes: Good and evil on one axis, with neutral in the middle; and law and chaos on the other, again with neutral in the middle.

A good character tends to be helpful and wants to protect those in need. An evil character tends to want only what's good for him no matter how much it hurts others. A neutral character is mainly out for himself but there are limits to how much he'll let others get hurt while he's getting what he wants.

A lawful character believes firmly in law, order, and rules. A chaotic character believes in every individual living his own way. A neutral character is somewhere in between—rules and laws are necessary but aren't worth respecting if they're too onerous.

The way those two axes interact shapes how every character relates to the people around him. A lawful good character is all about law and tradition for the benefit of all; a chaotic good character believes in doing right by others but can't stand restrictive laws and regulations. A lawful evil character believes that strong laws are the best way to keep himself in power; a chaotic evil character lives for the joys of anarchy, murder and destruction.

## Appearance and Personality

What do you look like? How do you behave? You can extrapolate a lot of this from your abilities, race, class, skills and alignment, but it's always fun to fill in the details.

Are you tall? Short? Heavy? Thin? A little in between? What color is your skin? Hair? Eyes? Clothing?

Are you clean and well-groomed? Slovenly? Downright filthy? Are you fashionable and well-dressed? Or do you wear whatever happens to be at hand, no matter how it looks? Do your clothes reflect where you come from, or where you are? Or a little of both?

Are you easygoing or a little uptight? Cynical or generous? Pleasant? Jovial? Sarcastic? Kind? Mean?

Remember, personality and alignment aren't always the same thing. There are plenty of unpleasant people who will go out of their way to help those in need. And there are plenty of fun, good-looking people who are cruel and vicious if that's what it takes to get their way.

Then again, there are some people whose kindness just shows through in everything they do. And some people, you know they're as nasty on the inside as they look on the outside.

As a player, it's up to you to decide how your character looks and acts—and what he's really all about, deep down.

## Character Actions

You resolve most actions in the game with a roll of a 20-sided die (called a "d20"). Add various modifiers to the number on the die to get your total roll. If the total is high enough, the action succeeds.

### Ability Check (d20 + ability modifier)

Ability checks cover the most basic actions. Busting down a door? Make a Strength check. Trying to remember a half-heard line of verse? Make an Intelligence check.

To make an ability check, roll 1d20 and add your ability modifier. If it's a Strength check, add your Strength modifier. Many factors can enhance or penalize ability checks—armor makes Dexterity checks harder, for example.

### Skill Check (d20 + ability + ranks)

A skill check is sort of a specialized ability check—an ability check with a bonus for extensive training.

Each skill is associated with a specific ability. The Climb skill is based on Strength, for example. The Bluff skill is based on Charisma.

Roll 1d20 and add the ability modifier, then add the number of ranks you have in the skill.

You may also add other bonuses—some races are good at particular skills, and sometimes being good at one skill makes you a better at another.

### Saving Throw (d20 + ability + class)

A saving throw is another specialized ability check, but it's not as premeditated as a skill check. You make it automatically in response to some threat.

There are three saving throws, or saves: Fortitude saves, Reflexes saves and Willpower saves. You make a Fortitude save to withstand a physical shock without being stunned or sickened. Make a Reflexes save to avoid a threat. Make a Willpower save to resist some psychic or mental influence.

Each saving throw is based on a particular ability: Constitution for Fortitude, Dexterity for Reflexes, and Wisdom for Willpower.

You gain saving throw bonuses based on your class and level.

To make a saving throw, roll 1d20 and add the appropriate ability modifier (including bonuses and penalties that affect ability checks), then add your class saving throw bonus.

### Armor Class (10 + ability + armor + class)

Armor Class (AC) is how hard your character is to hit in combat. It's not just armor, although wearing armor is a very good way to keep your skin from getting hit.

AC starts at 10. Add the bonus for your armor (if any), plus your Dexterity bonus, and modifiers for any other factors that make you harder or easier to hit. You also get an AC bonus based on your class and level—the better you are at fighting, the higher your class AC bonus.

There are also a couple of special versions of armor class: touch AC and flat-footed AC.

Touch AC applies whenever your actual armor doesn't protect you, such as when someone is trying to wrestle you to the ground. You get your touch AC the same as your usual AC, but don't include the bonus for armor.

Flat-footed AC applies when you don't have a chance to try to dodge out of the way—so your armor applies but you get no class defense bonus or modifier for high Dexterity.

### Attack Roll (d20 + ability + class)

When you want to hit somebody, make an attack roll. It's a 1d20 roll, just like an ability check—Strength for a hand-to-hand attack, Dexterity for a ranged attack—plus any modifiers that make you better or worse at hitting people.

You get an additional attack bonus based on your class and level.

If you beat the target's Armor Class, you do damage based on your weapon.

### Damage (varies)

Each weapon does a different amount of damage. A longsword does 1d8 damage, for instance—roll 1d8 and whatever number comes up is the damage. For a hand-to-hand attack and some ranged attacks, add your Strength modifier to the damage roll. Some feats and other factors also modify damage.

If your attack is a critical hit—usually that means a natural, unmodified "20" on your attack roll—you do more damage than usual. Most weapons do double damage on a critical hit.

### Spellcasting (no roll)

Some characters can cast spells. Usually spellcasting is a function of class—your class defines what kind of spells you can cast, and your level defines how many you can cast and how powerful they'll be.

To cast a spell you usually don't need to make a roll. It just works. But if someone interferes with you at the moment of casting—by, say, pushing you over or trying to kill you—you must make a Concentration skill check to avoid flubbing the spell.

Spells have levels of their own, so a 4th-level spell is inherently more powerful than a 1st-level spell. To cast a high-level spell you have to be a high-level spellcaster.

But to cast a high-level spell you also need a high score in a particular ability, which depends on your class. Wizards need Intelligence; clerics, druids and rangers need Wisdom; sorcerers, bards, gun mages and paladins need Charisma.

And if the spell affects a living person, the target usually gets a saving throw to resist it.

### Rolling Options

Sometimes you don't need to roll a d20—you can just take a static number instead. This is good when you really don't want to risk an abysmal roll. Neither of these options applies when you're under serious stress, however, so you can never use either of them for an attack roll or a saving throw.

**"Take 10":** If the action isn't particularly stressful, you can "Take 10" instead of rolling—that counts as an automatic d20 roll of 10.

**"Take 20":** If the DM (the Dungeon Master, the person running the game) says you have all the time in the world to get your action right, you can "Take 20." This counts as an automatic 20 on the d20.

### How Did I Do?

The total roll tells you about how good your performance is. Want a quick gauge of your overall quality in a skill? Add up your "Take 10" roll and consult this chart.

Total Roll	Action Quality
Less than 0	Abysmally, embarrassingly incompetent.
0-4	Clumsy and inept.
5-9	Sub-par.
10-14	Average.
15-19	Above average.
20-24	Impressive.
25-29	Most impressive.
30-34	Flawless.
35-39	Spectacular.
40+	Superhuman—literally.