

AX&X: CORE RULES

CHARACTER CREATION

Roll abilities, pick a kindred, class, and alignment, buy gear, then roll a Tie. Lifepaths adds a Trinket and a fuller past.

ABILITIES

Roll **3d6 in order**. Modifier: **3**: -3 | **4-5**: -2 | **6-8**: -1 | **9-12**: 0 | **13-15**: +1 | **16-17**: +2 | **18**: +3.

- **STR**: Melee attack and damage. Item **slots** equal to the score, with a pack worn.
- **DEX**: Missile attack. AC edge at high DEX, see Gear.
- **CON**: HP per Hit Die. Body saves.
- **INT**: Lore, languages. Magic-User with +1 or better: one extra 1st-level slot.
- **WIS**: Perception, Will saves. Cleric with +1 or better: one extra 1st-level slot.
- **CHA**: Reactions, parley, hirelings.

CLASSES

Level 1 HP is the **maximum** of one Hit Die + CON. A weapon outside your class list attacks at -2. Your **track** sets attack bonus and XP; your class adds a Hit Die, a save boon, a kit, and a signature.

- **Tracks**: Attack by Level: **Warrior** +Level, a 2nd attack at Level 6 and a 3rd at 11 | **Specialist** and **Priest** +half Level (round up) | **Mage** +half Level (round down). Level 2: **Specialist 1,500**, **Warrior and Priest 2,000**, **Mage 2,500** XP; each later Level doubles.
- **Fighter**: Warrior, d8. Any weapon and armor. +2 Body. Kit: weapon, shield, medium armor.
- **Barbarian**: Warrior, d10. +2 to saves vs magic, and distrusts magic items: will not wield one. No heavy armor; 40 ft on foot. Kit: a heavy weapon, hide armor, a slain beast's trophy.
- **Ranger**: Warrior, d8. +2 Body. Surprised only on a 1, surprises on 1-3. Tracks, hunts, forages as a Class Check, +2 in a chosen wild. Kit: bow, blade, woodcraft gear.
- **Cleric**: Priest, d6. Blunt weapons, medium or heavy armor. +2 Will. Divine spells; Turns undead. Lawful or Chaotic. Kit: holy symbol, mace, medium armor.
- **Thief**: Specialist, d6. Light weapons and armor. +2 Dodge. Stealth, locks, traps, climbing are Class Checks with DEX +2. **Backstab**: +4 and double damage on the unaware. Kit: thieves' tools, light weapon, light armor.
- **Magic-User**: Mage, d4. Dagger or staff, no armor. +2 to saves vs magic. Spellbook of two 1st-level spells. Kit: spellbook, dagger.

KINDRED

Any kindred, any class. One trait each.

- **Human**: +1 to one ability score after rolling, and a 10% bonus to all XP earned, rising fastest.
- **Dwarf**: +2 to Body saves. Sees 60 ft in the dark. Notes sloping passages and new stonework.
- **Elf**: Immune to Sleep and Charmed. Sees 60 ft in the dark.
- **Halfling**: Once per day, reroll a failed d20. +2 to stealth checks. +1 AC against foes larger than human. No two-handed weapons.

- **Half-Orc**: +1 to melee damage. Sees 60 ft in the dark.

ALIGNMENT

Law, Neutrality, or Chaos. Undead, demons, and most monsters are Chaotic. *Protection from Evil* and Turn Undead work against Chaos. Act against your alignment and the GM may strip a Cleric's spells until atonement.

GEAR

Take your **class kit** to start, or roll **3d6 x 10 GP** and shop. AC is 10, or the armor value, plus a DEX edge: **+1** at DEX 16-17, **+2** at 18. Slots equal STR with a pack worn, fewer without; a heavy hoard of coin costs slots at the GM's call, about one per 100. Each weapon is **blunt, edged, or piercing**, chosen when bought.

- **Weapons**: Light (1d4, 1 slot) **2 GP** | Medium (1d6, 1 slot) **10 GP** | Heavy, two hands (1d10, 2 slots) **15 GP** | Spear (1d6, 1 slot) **3 GP** | Polearm, two hands (1d8, 2 slots) **8 GP** | Javelin (1d4, 1 slot) **1 GP** | Darts (1d3, 1 slot) **1 GP** | Sling (1d4, 1 slot) **2 GP** | Bow, with arrows (1d6, 2 slots) **20 GP** | Crossbow, with bolts (1d6+1, 2 slots) **25 GP**.
- **Armor**: Light (AC 11, 1 slot) **20 GP** | Medium (AC 14, 2 slots) **75 GP** | Heavy (AC 16, 3 slots) **100 GP** | Shield (+1 AC, 1 slot) **10 GP**. A shield's bonus counts only against foes you face; splinter it to negate one hit, then it is gone.
- **Consumables**: Rations (7 days, 1 slot) **5 GP** | Torches (6, 1 slot) **1 GP** | Lantern and 3 flasks (2 slots) **12 GP** | Oil flask (thrown: 1d6 fire and Burning) **2 GP** | Blade poison, 1 dose **25 GP**.
- **Tools**: Rope 50 ft (1 slot) **1 GP** | Ten-foot pole (1 slot) **1 GP** | Spikes and hammer (1 slot) **3 GP** | Grapnel (1 slot) **5 GP** | Sack (holds 3 slots, 1 slot) **1 GP** | Mirror **10 GP** | Whistle, chalk **1 GP**.

PLAYING THE GAME

THE CORE ROLL

- **Check**: For a risky action, roll **1d20 + Ability Mod, 12+** to succeed. Fall short and it fails, or succeeds at a cost. 9+ for easy, 15+ for hard. Round down by default; a bonus or penalty counts once per source.
- **Class Check**: A check using class training adds your Level: **1d20 + Level + Ability Mod, 12+**.
- **Save**: A check against a hazard: **1d20 + half Level + Ability Mod, 12+**, or 10 + HD or higher if a creature caused it. Success avoids or halves the effect. Monsters save at **1d20 + HD, 10** + the caster's Level or higher.
 - **Body (CON)**: poison, death magic, paralysis, petrification, disease. **Dodge (DEX)**: breath, blasts, falling, pits, dart traps.
 - **Will (WIS)**: spells, charm, fear, illusion. Save against the effect, not the thing that delivers it.
- **Aid**: Spend your action to help an ally's check or attack: +2.
- **Natural 20 and 1 (optional)**: 20 auto-succeeds, an attack dealing **maximum** damage, doubled if vulnerable; 1 auto-fails, badly. Omit for 1e.

TIME

- **Turn (10 minutes)**: The exploration unit: move through a few rooms, search a room, pick a lock, or rest.

- **Rest**: After five turns of activity, rest one turn or be Weakened until you do. **Torches**: 6 turns. Lantern flask: 24 turns.
- **Round (10 seconds)**: The combat unit. On your turn you act or move, as Combat sets out.
- **Day**: Ends with 8 hours of sleep and a ration each. Skip the ration and you heal nothing and are Weakened until you eat.

EXPLORATION

- **Search**: One turn per 10 ft section, WIS check: find a secret door, trap, or hidden cache. A Thief uses a Class Check, and can disarm a trap they find. A trap left unfound springs when triggered, forcing its Dodge save.
- **Doors**: Stuck: STR check to force. Listen: WIS check, one turn. Held with spikes: 1d4 turns against a monster.
- **Wandering Monsters**: Roll 1d6 every third turn, and at once after a fight, a forced door, or a shout: a 1, or 1-2 after noise, brings a wanderer from the Threat table.
- **Darkness**: Swinging at what you can't see is -4. Targeted spells need line of sight.
- **Hirelings**: Torchbearer **1 GP/day** (HD 1/2, HP 3, AC 10). Man-at-arms **5 GP/day** (HD 1, HP 6, AC 13, Atk +1, 1d6). Each takes a half share of XP. When first asked to risk death, make a CHA check or they flee or quit.

ENCOUNTERS

- **Four Answers**: Meet a monster four ways: Fight, Flee, Talk, or Exploit a weakness. A look or a Lore check with INT tells you what cuts it, what it shrugs off, and what it wants.
- **Surprise**: When an encounter begins, each side rolls 1d6: on 1-2 it's caught off guard and loses the first round. A side that saw it coming, or that scouted ahead, isn't; a side that sneaks in unseen, on a won stealth check, surprises outright.
- **Distance**: An encounter opens about **2d6 x 10 ft** apart, less in tight quarters or on a surprise, more in the open. Then roll reaction and set the order.
- **Reaction**: When a monster's intent is unclear, roll 2d6 + CHA: **2-5** hostile | **6-8** wary, open to a deal | **9+** friendly, for now.
- **Morale**: When a group first loses a member, and again at half strength, the GM rolls 1d6: on 1-3 the rest flee or yield. Mindless or cornered monsters skip this.

COMBAT

- **Initiative**: Each round, roll 1d6 per side, high side first, or let the fiction set the order. On a tie, both act at once: resolve everything before anyone drops.
- **Action**: Each round, either **act**, attack, cast, use an item, or aid, with a short step, or **move** up to **30 ft** (20 in medium or heavy armor). **Run** doubles it. Reaching a far foe is a move; you strike next round, or **Charge**: close and attack at once, +2 to hit and -2 AC until your next turn.
- **Withdraw**: Leaving an enemy's reach draws a free attack. Withdraw instead: half speed, no action, and no attack drawn.
- **Attack**: Roll **1d20 + Attack Mod** vs **AC**. Attack Mod = your track bonus + STR (melee) or DEX (missile). Monsters attack at + HD. Two on one target: +2 each.
- **Range**: **Near** is 30 ft, a thrown weapon's reach. A bow, sling, or crossbow carries **60 ft**, 120 ft at -2, 240 ft at -5. **Shots a round**: darts 3, bow 2, sling 1; a crossbow fires once, then reloads an

action. Half cover: -2 to hit; full cover, no target. Loose into a melee and a miss hits a random figure, friend or foe.

- **Reach & Throw:** A spear or polearm strikes from the second rank, behind a front-line ally, and keeps a closing foe at bay. A spear or javelin throws to Near; any one-handed weapon at -2.
- **Damage:** Weapon die + STR for melee. A creature **resistant** to a damage type takes half; **vulnerable**, double. At 0 HP, roll on Brush with Death. Damage past 0 is ignored.
- **Poison:** A dose on a blade lasts one hit: Body save or Poisoned. Applying it is an action.
- **Casting:** Takes the action. If the caster took damage earlier in the round, the spell is lost.
- **Helpless:** Attacks on a sleeping, paralyzed, or bound target hit automatically.
- **Ending:** A side that is down, flees, or yields ends it. Break line of sight to escape, unless chased at equal speed. A CHA check may turn a fight to parley, if the enemy can talk.

HEALING & INJURY

- **Bind Wounds:** During a rest turn, once per day, regain 1d4 HP.
- **Sleep:** A Day regains one Hit Die + CON.
- **Haven:** A week in a safe town or refuge restores all HP and ends Injured.
- **Magic:** *Cure Light Wounds* and potions restore HP at once.
- **At 0 HP:** Drop to 0 and roll **Brush with Death: 1d6 + 1 per earlier Brush this day**, read below, **7+** always Slain. A new day clears the count. Slain, Maimed, and Petrified are permanent unless the GM provides a cure. The player may bring in a replacement at the next room or scene.
- **The Long Road:** Between delves a party lives off the land and lays up to heal, and with time and safety even a maiming can mend. The downtime supplement runs it, or rule it at the table.

CONDITIONS

- **The Answer:** A deadly effect has a counter: the right item, spell, or class skill, spent the round it lands, negates it. The GM telegraphs the trick a round before, so a prepared party can deny it.
- **Weakened:** -2 to all d20 rolls; -4 from two separate sources.
- **Poisoned:** 1d6 damage at the end of each round and Weakened. Body save at the end of each round to end it.
- **Paralyzed:** No move or action for 1d4 rounds. Helpless.
- **Asleep:** Helpless. Wakes when damaged or after a round of shaking.
- **Charmed:** Treats the caster as a trusted friend for a day. Harm from the caster ends it.
- **Frightened:** Must flee from the source for 1d4 rounds.
- **Burning:** 1d6 fire damage each round until a round is spent dousing.
- **Petrified:** Stone. Out of play, permanent unless cured.
- **Injured:** Weakened until healed as the Brush with Death result states.

MAGIC

- **Spell Levels:** Spells are level 1 to 3 here. Prepare spells into slots each day after sleeping. Slots by caster Level, as 1st/2nd/3rd: 1:

1 | 2: 2 | 3: 2/1 | 4: 3/2 | 5: 4/2/1 | 6: 4/2/2. Beyond Level 6, add one slot per Level.

- **Clerics:** Pray. May prepare any Cleric spell of a level they have slots for.
- **Magic-Users:** Prepare only from the spellbook, which starts with two 1st-level spells and takes a slot. A Day of study copies a scroll into it, using the scroll up. A lost book costs 15 GP and a Day per spell to rewrite.
- **Turn Undead:** Once per fight, a Cleric rolls **1d20 + Level + WIS** against the strongest undead present, 10 + its HD or higher. On success, **2d6 HD** of undead flee for 1d4 turns, weakest first. If the Cleric's Level is 3 or more above their HD, they are destroyed instead.
- **Cleric 1:** *Cure Light Wounds* (1d8 HP, ends Poisoned) | *Light* (30 ft, 6 turns) | *Bless* (+1 to the party's attacks and saves, one fight) | *Protection from Evil* (+2 AC and saves against Chaotic creatures, one fight).
- **Magic-User 1:** *Magic Missile* (1d4+1 force, never misses) | *Sleep* (2d4 HD of creatures of 4 HD or less, Asleep, no save) | *Shield* (+4 AC, one fight) | *Charm Person* (Will save or Charmed) | *Hold Portal* (a door stays shut 6 turns).
- **Higher Spells:** Spell levels 2 and 3, and the full spell list, are in the Spellbook supplement.

ADVANCEMENT

- **XP: 1 GP = 1 XP** once brought to town. A defeated or outwitted monster earns **25 XP per HD**. The first visit to each dungeon level earns **100 XP x depth**. Level 2 costs by track (see Classes); each later Level doubles the last.
- **Level Up:** Roll one more Hit Die + CON and add it to HP. Attacks follow your track; saves and slots follow Level.
- **Improvise:** These rules are bones, not the whole beast. When something's not covered, call a Check at 12+, jot down how you ruled it, and stick with that. Trust the fiction over the sheet: a sound ruling can stand in for a roll, and a foe can run on a look and a want. Anything from 1st Edition drops right in: AC is 19 minus the old number, HD is HD, saves as above.

RUNNING THE DUNGEON

- **Depth:** Dungeon level 1 is nearest the surface. On levels 1 and 2, roll Threat on the **1d6** table below; deeper, add the level and read the heavier foes from the Bestiary. Coin results multiply by the level.
- **Stocking:** For each room roll 1d6: **1-3** empty (1-in-6 chance of hidden treasure, found by Search) | **4** monster (1-in-2 chance it guards treasure) | **5** trap or trick (Dodge save or 2d6 damage, or a puzzle; below level 3, gas: Body save or Petrified) | **6** treasure, with a guard on 1-2 on 1d6.
- **Handing Out Treasure:** Treasure comes from stocking, not from fights. Defeated monsters carry 1d6 x 10 GP on a 1-2 on 1d6, else nothing but XP. A leader of 3+ HD carries one Treasure roll.

1D6 THREAT

HD Hit Dice, **AC** Armor Class, **Atk** attack bonus and damage type. Attack bonus equals HD. **Mindless** is immune to Sleep, Charmed, Poisoned, and Frightened. The Bestiary holds the heavier foes and the full list of keywords.

- 1 **Giant Rats:** HD 1/2, HP 2, AC 12, Atk +0 (1d3 piercing). 2d6 rats. A bite on a 20 also gives disease: Poisoned.
- 2 **Goblin Band:** HD 1, HP 4, AC 13, Atk +1 (1d6). 1d6 goblins ambush from cover.
- 3 **Skeleton Guard:** HD 1, HP 5, AC 13, Atk +1 (1d6). 1d6. Mindless. Resistant to piercing and edged, vulnerable to blunt.
- 4 **Orc Patrol:** HD 1, HP 5, AC 13, Atk +1 (1d8). 1d4 warriors demanding blood or toll.
- 5 **Ghoul:** HD 2, HP 10, AC 14, Atk +2, two claws and a bite (1d3). Any hit: Body save or Paralyzed. Mindless.
- 6 **Giant Spider:** HD 2, HP 9, AC 14, Atk +2 (1d6 piercing). A hit: Body save or Poisoned. Webs: Dodge save or stuck 1d4 rounds.

1D6 TREASURE

- 1 **Loose Pouch:** 2d6 x 10 GP.
- 2 **Coin Cache:** 1d6 x 100 GP.
- 3 **Chest:** 1d6 x 100 GP and 1d4 gems (50 GP each). Locked.
- 4 **Art:** Silverware, idols, or a tapestry worth 300 GP. Two slots.
- 5 **Gems:** 2d6 cut stones at 50 GP each, in one pouch. One slot.
- 6 **Magic Item:** Roll **1d6: 1-4** a Potion (Healing 1d8 HP, or Giant Strength, +2 melee attack and damage for 6 turns) | **5-6** a Charm (a Scroll of one level 1-3 spell, or a +1 weapon or armor, which counts as magic and silver). Plus 1d6 x 100 GP. Named relics and the full roster are in the Relics and Wonders supplement.

1D6 TIES TO THE WORLD

Roll once. Also roll 1d6 for home: **1** the Free City | **2** a hill fort | **3** the dwarf halls | **4** the elf wood | **5** the river shires | **6** the orc marches. Home gives shelter and one named contact.

- 1 **Ally:** A named NPC owes you their life. They will come once if called.
- 2 **Enemy:** Someone wants you dead, and knows where you drink.
- 3 **Debt:** You owe 200 GP to someone who collects.
- 4 **Patron:** A temple, guild, or noble pays 50 GP for each map you bring back.
- 5 **Mentor:** An old adventurer. One question answered per delve, by letter.
- 6 **Kin:** A relative went into the dungeon and never came back.

1D6 BRUSH WITH DEATH

Rolled at 0 HP. +1 per earlier Brush today; **7+** is Slain.

- 1 **Close Call:** Negate the blow that felled you and any effect it carried.
- 2 **Close Call:** As above.
- 3 **Scarred:** -1 CHA checks or +1 intimidate. Back to full HP, ailments cleared.
- 4 **Shaken:** Drop your gear. 1 HP. Injured until a Haven.
- 5 **Grievous Wound:** Out until healed by magic or sleep. Injured until a Haven.
- 6 **Maimed:** Lose a limb or eye. Out 1d4 turns, then 1 HP. Injured for good.