



DnD: TL;DR version 0.1.1 print PDF

A Fast and Loose Guide to Dungeons and Dragons

by Rich Jones

Too long, didn't read: This guide makes DnD super fun and easy.

This is a guide for new players and dungeon masters who want to play a **fast-paced, fun-optimized** version of the game. We prefer fun and hilarity over rule-following.

Ideally, this guide should be all you need to play a fun game with friends, newbies, normies, hesitant significant others, skeptics and moms. Typically people who have watched *Stranger Things* are into it and have a really good time.

Requirements

TL;DR: Friends, a printer, some PDFs, some pens, hecka beers.

- 2-4 **players** + 1 **Dungeon Master** 🧑🧑🧑🧑
- **Pen and paper** for each player 📝📝📝📝
- A set of **game dice** for each player 🎲🎲🎲🎲
 - Or, use your phone. You can say "Siri, roll a D20" to an iPhone and it works.
- 4-6 **beers** per player 🍺🍺🍺🍺
- **Speakers** for playing [epic background music](#) 🎧

- Costumes/Hats (Optional)
 - The game is more fun if you all get into character with dorky hats

Basic Overview

TL;DR: Invent a character, explore a fantasy world, talk to the people living there, fight crazy monsters, acquire plunder and glory, roll dice, drink beers, yell at your friends and have fun.

Dungeons and Dragons a fantasy role playing game. The game is played by 2-4 **player characters**, who play as adventurers exploring a world, and one **Dungeon Master**, who controls the context of the adventure and plays as the **non-player characters** and **monsters**.

Rules

There are very few rules to the game, so creativity and ingenuity are rewarded. The players will be placed into challenging situations, (such as fighting an army of monsters, discovering and deciphering mysterious clues, and interrogating, seducing and deceiving non-player characters), and will have to use their imaginations to devise ways to overcome those challenges.

Mechanics

The primary mechanic of the game is the roll of a 20-sided dice known as a **D20**. Players state what they want to do (for instance, *"I want to use the rope to swing across the chasm"*), and then roll a D20.

The Dungeon Master decides to themselves how difficult that task is (out of 20), and if the dice scores higher than that number then the player succeeds, and if not then they fail. The Dungeon Master then narrates the result of the action (*"You try to swing across the gaping chasm, but your grip slips half-way across, and you fall to the canyon floor. You take two damage. You see glowing eyes in the darkness."*)

Natural rolls of 1 and 20 result in spectacular failures and success, respectively.

Goals

The goal of the game is simply to play the game, because it is fun!

Generally, the Dungeon Master is trying to steer you onto a fun quest, but ultimately, it's all up to you. Want to start a peasant revolt against the evil king? Go ahead! Want to turn a dragon into your pet and become the ruler of the land? Roll for it! Want to start a seedy brothel? Uh, sure!

The only limits are your imagination and the rolls of dice. Have fun!

Making Characters

TL;DR: Choose a character type. Print a [premade sheet](#). In a pinch, pretend to be Han Solo or Darth Vader but as a Lord of the Rings character.

Every player besides the Dungeon Master needs to create a character. This will be something like *Riceak Beestinger*, *Chaotic Gnomish Druid*, or *Hollyatra Gellantara*, *Lawful Human Paladin*.

Each player will need to choose a **race**, a **class**, an **alignment**, and a **name**. Then, print the character sheet for that combination from the [PDFs in this repository, linked below](#). Choose a combination that you think will be fun to play as.

You'll probably want to make sure that your party has good a balance of skills and personalities. *You can't all be Han Solo!*

If you're super lazy, just use these characters for your party, which should suit any starting campaign:

- [Half-Orc Barbarian](#)
- [Human Cleric](#)
- [Elven Ranger](#)
- [Tiefling Rogue](#)

Players can do this themselves before the session starts to save time, or the DM can just print out a bunch of the archetypical character types for players to choose from, or you can print them on demand.

Race

TL;DR: What do you look like?

Race defines the **general physical characteristics** of your character.

Race can affect how people interact with your character. Non-player characters in the games may have their own racial prejudices - for instances, if you go to a Dwarven cave, the Dwarves there might be racist towards your Elf player. This can lead to some funny situations.

Also, big characters can throw small characters, which is always funny.

Choose one:

Race	Size	Attributes
Halfling	Tiny	Nimble, brave (basically just Hobbits)
Gnome	Very Small	Cunning, sees in the dark
Dwarf	Small	Resilient, sees in the dark
Elf	Short	Keen senses
Half-Elf	Short-ish	Rare, skilled, diplomatic
Tiefling	Regular	Has horns and a tail
Human	Regular	You know what humans are
Half-Orc	Tall	Savage
Dragonborn	Taller	Scales, tough

Class

TL;DR: What can you do?

Class defines the **skills and abilities** of your character.

Some can use magic, some are good at melee combat, some are good a ranged weaponry, and some are good at seduction. Pick the one that you think would be fun role play as!

Class	Quality	Good at
Barbarian	Strong	Hitting things
Bard	Musical	Seduction
Cleric	Religious magic	Healing
Druid	Natural magic	Potions, plants/animals
Fighter	Combat	Fighting. Duh.
Monk	Natural magic	Potions, plants/animals
Paladin	Religious knight	Religious violence, chivalry
Ranger	Scouting	Archery, stealth
Rogue	Criminal	Thievery, lockpicking, ruses
Sorcerer	Energy magic	Cool spells
Warlock	War magic	Cool spells
Wizard	General magic	Cool spells

Alignment

TL;DR: How do you behave - good or bad? Lawful or criminal?

Alignment describes your character's **motivations and behavior**. There are two axis here: good and evil, lawful and chaotic. These map pretty well to archetypical movie characters, Darth Vader is lawful evil, Han Solo is chaotic neutral, etc.

Again, choose one you think would be fun:

Lawful Good (Superman)	Neutral Good (Gandalf)	Chaotic Good (Batman)
Lawful Neutral (Stannis Baratheon)	True Neutral (Saul Goodman)	Chaotic Neutral (Han Solo)
Lawful Evil (Darth Vader)	Neutral Evil (Voldemort)	Chaotic Evil (The Joker)

Name

Finally, make a name. A good DM will enforce that you call all the other players by their character names, so **make sure yours is funny**. Try a dick or poop joke here.

Alternately, you can just use this [character name generator](#) and see what happens.

Character Sheets

Now that you've chosen your **race**, **class**, **alignment** and **name**, find the right **character sheet** for that combination of race and class in [this directory](#) and print it out. This is yours now. Fill in your alignment and name at the top, then read over the sheet. You'll see that you already have your stats calculated and a list of weapons and items in your inventory that you'll start the game with. Hooray!

Important Numbers

On your sheet, there are a few important numbers (and some unimportant ones that we're going to ignore). **Hit Points (HP)**, which are how much damage you can take before you die, **Armour Class (AC)**, which is how well you are defended against enemy bows, and six **ability modifiers**, which are numbers added to your rolls for certain tasks. They correspond to:

Ability	Meaning	Modifies
Strength (STR)	Physical strength	Moving things, hitting things, breaking doors, doing damage
Dexterity (DEX)	Gymnastic ability	Generates armour class, climbing, dodging, balancing, archery
Constitution (CON)	Health and stamina	Generates hit points, concentration
Intelligence (INT)	Reasoning and learning	Deciphering, appraising, forgery, searching, spellcasting
Wisdom (WIS)	Knowledge, gut feelings	Knowing arcane knowledge, sensing traps and secrets, listening, healing
Charisma (CHA)	Seductive ability	Seduction, charm, deception, disguise, animal taming

When you try to do one of the those types of things, add your modifier to your roll.

Gameplay

TL;DR: Just roll a D20 and see what happens.

Okay! Now you're ready to play. The Dungeon Master is going to read a little narrative exposition, then you're off!

Choose the player with the highest Speed value on their sheet to go first. Players then take turns interacting with the world, passing to the left after their turn is over. If the turn passes to the Dungeon Master while there are enemy monsters in play, the Dungeon Master plays a turn for each of those monsters before passing again.

There are three pillars to gameplay: **exploration** of the game world, **interaction** with non-player characters, and **combat** with monsters.

Exploration

TL;DR: Look for clues, traps, treasure and secrets.

Exploration is the primary mechanic when there are no non-player characters or monsters around. This usually means **looking around** the environment for clues or secrets, discovering or using items, or solving puzzles. Gameplay elements often involve, but aren't limited to:

- Solving puzzles
- Surmounting obstacles (climbing walls, lockpicking, etc.)
- Looking for treasure
- Taming animals
- Stealthy intrusion and escape
- Discovering and setting traps
- Starting fires and other diversions

Interaction

TL;DR: Use disguises and sexuality to acquire information.

Eventually, players will encounter **non-player characters**. These might be guards, townsfolk, nobility, evil generals, holy spirits or anything else. Generally, they will have some information for the players that they'll need to acquire somehow. This isn't always easy, and often involves the use of:

- Sexual seduction
- Threats of violence
- Disguise, forgery, trickery and slight-of-hand
- Bribery

- Kidnapping, interrogation, and torture
- Navigating racial discrimination and crossing language barriers

Combat ✕

TL;DR: Roll a D20 to see if you hit or not, then roll another dice to see how much damage you did.

At some point, players will encounter **violent monsters**. There are no limits to how they can interact with those monsters, but there are rules for melee (sword-type), ranged (bow-type) and magic combat.

As a rule of thumb, a player's turn represents about **10 seconds** of elapsed game time. So, if a player wants to climb a ladder, untie a rope and swing into a monster, that would take successful rolls across three turns.

The Dungeon Master should try to keep track of the general positions of the players and the monsters so that they can only hit each other if they're close to each other. Generally though, they shouldn't be too strict about this and should just let the combat flow naturally.

Combat strikes happen in two phases (in the same turn): rolls to hit, and rolls to deal damage.

Attacking

To attack, a player declares who they are going to hit and what they want to hit with. For example, *"I strike at the nearest Goblin with my hand-axe."*

The attack roll is a normal **D20 roll, plus the Attack bonus** (STR or DEX + Proficiency) listed on the character sheet for that weapon. If the resulting number is higher than the enemy's Armour Class, then the attack counts as a hit. If not, then the attack misses, and the turn passes to the next player.

If the attack roll is a hit, then the player rolls another dice (listed on the character sheet for each weapon), and that number is subtracted from the monster's hit points. If resulting hit points are less than zero, then the monster dies.

To spice up the combat, the Dungeon Master should narrate all attacks in explicit gory detail. **Natural 1s** and **natural 20s** should result in spectacular self-inflicted wounds and damaging strikes, respectively.

Defending

Defending is the same process as attacking, but in reverse. The Dungeon Master rolls for each attacking creature, and deals damage if the attack rolls are higher than the defending player's Armour Class.

Death

If a player's HP drops below 0, they die. This generally isn't very much fun for that player, so the Dungeon Master may choose to use divine inspiration to help that player out before or after they die. You can also introduce Death as a non-player character and have the player barter with Death in exchange for humiliating punishments.

Experience Points and Levels

After winning a combat round or complete a quest, players are rewarded with **Experience Points (XP)**. When a player gets enough XP, they increase their level by one.

Levelling up gives a player **two +1 points** to improve their abilities of their choosing, and adds **6 + CON** to that player's Hit Points. They don't immediately heal to full health, but they do get the new hit points.

XP is **cumulative**, and levelling up happens at *300, 900, 2700, 6500, 14000, 23000, 34000, 48000, 64000, 85000, 100000, 120000, 140000, 165000, 195000, 225000, 265000, 305000 and 355000* points.

Dungeon Mastering

TL;DR: Make your players have as much fun as possible by being kind of a dick to them.

As a dungeon master, your job is to make the other players have as much fun as possible.

Speed

Make sure that all the players at the table are engaged, and that nobody is hogging all the action. If somebody is trying to derail your game too much, feel throw to use divine intervention to throw punishments at them.

Don't let players take too long for their turns or the game becomes boring. It really shouldn't take more than 30 seconds a turn. If this becomes a problem, use a timer.

To make sure that the game moves along quickly, if somebody asks you if they can do something, the best answer to give them is *"roll for it!"*

If the players are all playing along nicely, solving your puzzles and coming up with creative solutions to your problems, you can reward them with **inspiration points**, which acts like a currency that they can use to improve the results of their rolls.

Adjusting Play

Different players like different things, so feel free to adjust your campaign to suit their needs. If they like combat, throw a bunch of enemies at them. If they like exploration, create puzzles for them to solve. If they like

interaction, create interesting characters for them to talk to. A good campaign will have a balance of all these.

Your players will have different motivations for playing. Newer players generally just want to acquire new weapons and armour to improve their character's fighting skills, but other players may just be more interested in discovering more about the plot of the campaign. Figure out what different people like and adjust the campaign accordingly.

Premade Campaigns

The internet is full of pre-made campaigns of varying quality. Most of the official ones can be bought for a few bucks each, but you can also generally find the PDFs on sketchy Russian download websites.

I like the *Adventurer's League* series because the missions are short and the files are well formatted, but because the missions are short they don't go as deep. Try to find one that's right for your players!

Official

- [Harried in Hilsfar](#)
- [Defiance in Phlan](#)

Fan-made

- [Fires of Hell](#)

Making Your Own Campaigns

I haven't done this yet. Advice welcome!

A popular approach is to simply repurpose scenarios and characters from popular media. For instance, maybe take the plot of *Alien* but replace the alien with a dragon. Or maybe have your adventurers go on the train-robbery mission from *Firefly*. You get the idea!

There's also no reason why your quest has to be in a Tolkein-esque fantasy universe. Just port the characters into whatever type of world you want (steampunk and sci-fi worlds are pretty popular alternatives).

Other Resources

Official

- [Player's Basic Rules](#)
- [Dungeon Master's Basic Rules](#)

- [Monster Manual](#)
- [Spell List](#)

Unofficial

- [Ronny's Character Creation Guide](#)
- [Old Dungeon Master Blog](#)
- [r/DnD Subreddit](#)
- [D and D Wiki](#)
- [Elven Tower Map Vault](#)
- [Donjon's Printable Random Dungeon Generator](#)

Improving this Guide

Got ways to improve this guide? Just send a pull request!