

Additional Combat Actions

When players engage in combat, most characters rely on the Attack Action or casting spells. However, there are a variety of other choices in combat. Under this option, the list of possible Actions in combat is expanded, providing even more variety for players to lean into the different strengths of their characters. The following options are available for characters to spend an Action on:

Brace

You prepare yourself for incoming attacks and effects. You gain advantage on any saving throws you make until the start of your next turn.

This is a counterpart to the Dodge Action, allowing players to be more tactical with their defensive options.

Discern

You take a moment to attempt to identify a creature you can see within 60 feet, or, if you are unfamiliar with it, to attempt to analyze it and discern some of its characteristics. You must make a Discern check against that creature, which is based on an Intelligence skill, and if you succeed against the DC, the DM will give you some relevant information about the target of your Discern check.

The player makes either a Religion, Nature, Arcana, or History check—whichever is most relevant—using their Intelligence modifier, unless they have a feature that allows otherwise. As a DM, you can set the DC based on the DC guide within the DMG (anywhere from 5 to 30). If the player meets the DC, you can give them a hint about how to solve the encounter if there is a non-violent way to handle the creature, or you could tell them some of the creature's strengths and weaknesses in combat—the goal here is to reward the character's attempt to think their way through the encounter with something they can use to form a plan of action. Typically, subsequent successes targeting the same creature have no additional benefit—something a player should be made aware of before committing to using the action again. However, if the character fails their Discern check, they can continue to try until they succeed, using the Discern action again; while identifying a creature may be difficult or impossible, they may still be able to piece together information and discover or remember something helpful. The Discern Action allows players to utilize their Intelligence in combat without needing to be an Intelligence-based spellcaster.

Distract

You target a creature you can see within 30 feet and attempt to distract it from an incoming effect. Make a Charisma (Performance) check. On a success, the creature has disadvantage on the next ability check or saving throw it makes before the start of your next turn.

The DC for the check is equal to 8 plus the target's Wisdom Saving Throw modifier. The Distract Action is another way that characters can use their Charisma in combat, without being a Charisma-based spellcaster. Unlike most of the other Actions here, it is difficult for a character to take advantage of this Action on their own, but it provides a method for different characters to work together in combat.

Intuit

You take a moment to analyze a creature's fighting style and movements to predict what they will do next. Make a Wisdom (Insight) check against a creature you can see within 30 feet. On a success, you gain advantage on your next attack roll against that creature, and that creature has disadvantage on their next attack roll against you; these benefits last until the end of your next turn.

The DC for the check is equal to 8 plus the creature's Dexterity modifier (minimum 1) plus the creature's Charisma modifier (minimum 1), taking into consideration the creature's physical and mental stats—the creature has the ability to throw off a player by being either more nimble in combat (Dexterity) or being difficult to read (Charisma). The unusual nature of the DC prevents it from being too high by limiting it to flat ability score modifiers, while setting a minimum threshold for each ASM prevents a creature having a low stat from making the check too easy. The Intuit Action allows for characters to weave their Wisdom into their combat, providing both offensive and defensive benefits when a character can read their target.

Menace

You target a creature you can see within 30 feet and attempt to intimidate it in some way. Make a Charisma (Intimidation) check. On a success, the target is frightened until the end of its next turn.

The DC for the check is equal to 8 plus the target's Wisdom Saving Throw modifier. The Menace Action is one way that characters can use their Charisma in combat, although you could allow characters to use their Strength modifier for the check instead to allow characters who are typically martial to have an additional bit of utility in combat.