

D&D ONE-SHOTS

1. SETUP

Estimated total time for rules and setup: 30 min.

CHARACTER SHEETS

- For expediency, give out characters based on player descriptions
 - Example questions to ask
 - Is this your first time playing D&D? Maximum difficulty medium.
 - Do you know the classes? What class would you like?
 - Do you play strategy games? What playstyle do you like?
 - What kind of character would you like to play?
 - If you could think of a character in media that you'd like to play? Who would that be?
 - Do you want a completely random character?
- Give 1 min. to fill out name, race, and appearance

DICE

- Distribute and organize dice → called d # of sides
 - Start with d4, then individually go up to d20
 - Get everyone to hang out to their d20

2. OVERVIEW

STRUCTURE

- “Rules: there are no rules”
- Think of it as a structure, a self-refereed, conversational and mutual story building between **DM** and **players**
 1. **DM** describes the scenario
 2. The **players** take action upon the scenario to achieve a goal
 3. **DM** resolves effects and consequences of **player** actions → this in and of itself creates a new scenario
 - Repeat 2-3 infinitely
- An example of building a scenario:
 1. **DM:** “The players walk down a long hallway, finding a door at the end.”
 2. **P1:** “Can I open the door?”
 3. **DM:** “No, door is locked.”
 - End of scene
- Alternatively:
 3. **DM:** “Yes, the door opens into an empty square room with a treasure chest in the middle.”
 4. **P2:** “Can I open the treasure chest.”
 5. **DM:** “No, chest is locked.”
 - End of scene
- Alternatively:
 5. **DM:** “Yes, the chest opens, you are sucked into a pocket dimension, floating in a star-speckled space.”
- In summary: **player** proposes action, **DM** can say yes or no or *maybe*

3. PROBABILITY

MAKING CHECKS

- Sometimes, players want to attempt actions that push physical/psychological limits of characters/world
 - These are the maybe situations → need resolve it to yes or no in order to proceed with the game/story
 - This means that sometimes, player attempts at actions may unexpectedly fail
 - Don't feel bad or get frustrated: failures are a blessing in disguise (excitement & surprises!)
 - How to determine yes or no? → probability checks (everyone hold d20)
- Example 1:
 - **DM:** "The players walk down a long hallway, finding a door at the end."
 - **P1:** "Can I open the door?"
 - **DM:** "No, door is locked."
 - **P2:** "Can I try harder to open the door?"
 - **DM:** "Yes, make a check."
 - **P2** rolls d20
 - Before the roll, **DM** thinks about how difficult it is to open the door, assigns a minimum number for check to be successful → this is called the "Difficulty Class" (or DC)
 - 25% chance for success → DC 16
 - If check is 16 or higher, action is successful
- 25% is low, how to improve odds? Two ways (see below)

1) STAT BONUSES

- Playing to specific character strengths → see stats in the middle of the sheets
- Stat bonuses can be applied to checks depending on the course of action taken by the character
 - Example 2:
 - **P3:** "Instead of simply trying harder to open the door, can I kick the door down?"
 - **DM:** "Yes, make a STR check."
 - **P3** rolls d20, adds STR bonus vs. DC 16 → on success, door is kicked down
 - DC remains the same, but chances are increased
 - Example 3:
 - **P4:** "Can I pick the lock?"
 - **DM:** "Yes, make a DEX check."
 - **P4** rolls d20, adds DEX bonus vs. DC 16 → on success, door is unlocked
 - Example 4:
 - **P1:** "Can I look for weak points in the door?"
 - **DM:** "Yes, make an INT check."
 - Easier to spot a weakness than to open the door → DC 10
 - **P1** rolls d20, adds INT bonus vs. DC 10 → on success, weakness is found
 - Example 5:
 - **P1:** "I lie to my group and say, 'no weak points were found'."
 - **P2:** "Can I try to determine if they're lying or not?" → special check called contest
 - **DM:** "Yes, **P1** make a CHA check to set the DC for detecting the lie; **P2** make a WIS check against the DC set by **P1** to see if you successfully deduce that **P1** is lying."
- Main takeaway: play to your character stats

2) ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

- Thinking outside the box, being imaginative and creative while being consistent within game
- Depending on the course of action, **DM** may grant advantage to a roll, improving success rate
 - Example 6:
 - **P1**: “I tell **P3** where the weak points of the door are.”
 - **P3**: “Can I try to kick the door down?”
 - **DM**: “Yes, make a STR check with advantage.”
 - **P3** rolls two d20s and takes the *higher*, then adds STR bonus vs. DC 16
- But it’s a two-way street, **DM** may impose disadvantage to a roll, reducing success rate
 - Example 7:
 - **P4**: “Can I try to trip **P3** as they try to kick down the door?”
 - **DM**: “Yes, **P3** make a STR check with disadvantage.”
 - **P3** rolls two d20s and takes the *lower*, then adds STR bonus vs. DC 16
- In full summary, that’s how probabilities work in D&D

4. COMBAT

OVERVIEW

- More stringency in rules and mechanics for combat
 - Procedural, everyone takes their turn in sequence
 - Numbers/probability-based, like checks previously described (hold on to your d20’s!)

COMBAT BASICS

- Before combat starts, **DM** says, “Roll initiative”.
 - Initiative is a special type of check determining combat order
 - All players roll d20 and add initiative bonus (big number in boot labeled “INIT”)
 - Combat begins, participants take *turns* in descending order of initiative rolls
 - Once all combatants have had a *turn*, the *round* is complete → return to the top of the order and repeat
 - Time scale: 1 round = 6 seconds (very fast!)
- **Attacks** and **abilities**, the two most common things to do on in combat (keep that d20 in hand!)
- Making and defending against an **attack**
 - Damage is dealt only on a successful hit
 - Attack roll is a special type of check determining if attack is successful
 - Example: **P1** attacks **P2**
 - **P1** rolls a d20, adds attack bonus (shown in “attack” box)
 - Compare with a special DC called “Armor Class” or AC (number in shield)
 - If **P1** attack roll is equal to or greater than **P2** AC, attack is successful
 - Resolve damage for attack as described by text
 - **P2** reduces hit points (number in heart)
- Using and defending against an **ability**
 - Most non-harmful abilities automatically succeed (boosting allies, healing, etc.)
 - For most harmful abilities, the target has a chance to defend against the ability
 - Save (short for saving throw), is a special type of check that determines if the target of an ability avoids some or all of its effects

- Example: **P3** uses ability on **P4**
 - Determine the type of save to be made (stated at the end of the ability description)
 - **P4** rolls a d20, adds stat bonus based on type of save
 - Compare with ability DC (shown in “abilities” box)
 - If **P4** save is equal to or greater than **P3** ability DC, **P4** may take a lesser effect or none at all (depending on the ability description)
 - If **P4** save is less than **P3** ability DC, they take full effect of the ability
 - Resolve effects for ability as described by text
- Some **attacks/abilities** are more powerful and have limited uses denoted by boxes

TAKING YOUR TURN

- What and how much can you actually do on your turn?
- Below, usable in any order:
 - Use as much of your available movement over your turn (small number in the boot)
 - Communicate to any creatures around
 - **1 action**
 - Either “attacks” or “abilities” box
 - Unspecified/creative action (i.e., ability checks described earlier)
 - **1 bonus action** (if available in “bonus actions” box or specified by text)
 - **1 reaction** (if available in “reactions” box or specified by text)
- **Features** passive traits that are always “on”
- **Special** most character empowering trait – can be action, bonus action, reaction, or feature
- **Items** are general lesser utility tools that player can be situationally creative with

OTHER NOTES

- Anything on the sheet can be used in or out of combat
- Many minor rules have been skipped and will likely come up during play → just roll with it

5. ROLEPLAYING

- For first-timers, forego completion of the roleplay section
 - First-timers spend too long making characters and not enough time understanding mechanics
 - Then, they don’t know how to actually play their character to their description
 - Just play your character comfortably and naturally and experience them as you go
- Otherwise
 - Ideals: highest beliefs/values
 - Bonds: people/places/things of sentiment
 - Flaws:
 - Personality: standout quirks

6. FINAL NOTES

Cooperate, play together, be considerate, be nice, make everyone comfortable, have fun, share the experience!
(Give players 5-10 minutes to review character sheets before starting)