



Outside of the skills required for combat, thievery, and magic, your character knows the skills dictated by the occupation he had before choosing a life of adventure. When outside the dungeon – or even when inside the dungeon – there may be situations where a specific skill would be useful.

## SKILLS BY OCCUPATION

A character's 0-level occupation determines the basic skills he can use. If the player can logically role-play the connection between his occupation and a skill in a way that the character's background supports the skill in question, then his character can make what is called a trained skill check. For example, a farmer would be able to identify seeds, a woodcutter could scale a wall, and a fisherman could swim an underground lake.

If your character's background does not support a skill use, your character is not familiar with the activity. In this case, he makes what is called an untrained skill check. For example, a former gravedigger could not identify strange seeds.

If there is ambiguity – for example, your character may have used the skill somewhat but not regularly – the character may make an untrained check with a +2 bonus. For example, a former miller may have some knowledge of the seeds his mill worked with.

Finally, if the skill is something that any adult could have a reasonable chance of attempting, then any character can make a trained skill check.

## MAKING A SKILL CHECK

A skill check is made by rolling a die. If the skill is trained, the character rolls 1d20 for the check. Otherwise, he rolls 1d10. Then the appropriate modifiers are applied to the roll, and the total is compared to the difficulty challenge (DC) for the task at hand. If the roll is greater than or equal to the DC, the skill check succeeds. Otherwise, it fails.

Skill checks are modified by the appropriate ability score. This is described in more detail below. Generally speaking, a character's Strength, Agility, Stamina, Personality or Intelligence modifier apply to any skill check.

Example: A 2nd-level wizard was once a scribe. His friend, a 2nd-level warrior, was once a blacksmith. While adventuring, they discover a magical anvil. Any sword forged on the anvil gains special powers. The warrior can make a trained attempt to forge a sword, given his background in blacksmithing, and would thus roll 1d20 on a blacksmithing skill check. The wizard is untrained, and would roll 1d10 on his check. Later in the adventure, they find a strange tome with foreign writing. The wizard, with his background as a scribe, can try to translate the tome as a trained skill. The warrior would have to make the check untrained.

## DIFFICULTY LEVELS

DC 5 tasks are child's play. Typically, these minor challenges aren't rolled unless there is a consequence for failure. Example: walking on a four-foot-wide castle wall requires no check, but walking a four-foot-wide bridge across a yawning chasm does, as there is a significant consequence to failure for this easy task.

DC 10 tasks are a man's deed. The weak and unskilled could not likely achieve these tasks. Example: kicking down a door, scaling a stone wall, or hearing the approach of a cautious footpad.

DC 15 tasks are feats of derring-do. It takes someone special to accomplish these tasks. Examples: leaping the gap between two city roofs, hurling a log at an oncoming bear, or grabbing a pouch lashed to the saddle of a galloping stallion.

DC 20 tasks are a hero's work. Only the most super-human characters attempt and succeed at these tasks.



## OPPOSED SKILL CHECKS

Sometimes two characters attempt opposite actions. For example, a warrior may try to bash down a door while the orc on the other side holds it shut. In this case, roll the appropriate skill check for both parties – Strength for the warrior bashing the door and Strength for the orc holding it shut. The higher roll wins.

## WHEN NOT TO MAKE A SKILL CHECK

Skill checks are designed for use when a system of abstract rules is necessary to adjudicate a situation. Only make a skill check when practical descriptions by the players will not suffice.

For example, imagine the characters are exploring a room whose walls are covered in clay tablets, one of which conceals a hidden door. Instead of asking the characters for a skill check, ask for their actions. If a player specifies that he is removing the clay tablets from the wall, his character discovers the hidden door. If the door is cleverly concealed behind a false wall, the players may have to further specify their characters tap the walls to listen for hollow sounds. No search check is necessary.

On the other hand, if the characters are in a dirt-walled cave attempting to sieve the floor until they find a dropped dagger, a search check may be perfectly appropriate to represent their chances of success.

## SKILL CHECKS FOR COMMON ACTIVITIES

In general, skill checks are associated with either a field of knowledge (reflected in the 0-level occupation) or a specific ability score (such as Strength or Agility). Here is a list of common skill checks in a dungeon, and the ability scores associated with them.

**Balancing:** Agility

**Breaking down doors, bending bars, and lifting gates:** Strength

**Climbing:** Strength or Agility, as appropriate. A sheer wall uses Strength; a craggy cliff or tree uses Agility. Typically the player can choose to use one or the other ability, depending on how he wishes to approach the situation.

**Listening:** Luck

**Searching and spotting:** Intelligence

**Sneaking:** Agility

