

# Chapter 3: How to Play the First Time

After the players have created their characters, using character sheets to record ability scores and other information, the GM will describe the situation. Often, the characters are presumed to have already met and formed an adventuring party, but this is completely up to the GM. The GM's description of the beginning of the game might include a few details about the world, or this knowledge might be reserved for the players to discover bit by bit. Regardless of the level of campaign information, the GM will also describe the characters' immediate surroundings—a tavern, a wild moor, the top of a stairwell leading down into darkness, or whatever other situation the GM has chosen as the starting point for these adventurers' careers. After setting the scene, the course and success of the party is down to the players' judgment and creativity.

The players tell the GM what their characters are doing, such as “Leofric climbs the slope, sword in hand, to see what's at the crest,” or, “I light my torch and head down the stairs.” The GM responds by telling the players what the characters see, hear, taste, smell and feel. There will sometimes be peaceful encounters with non-player characters (NPCs), and the GM will play the roles of these, either playing the part or giving the players a summary of what the NPC says and does.

## Time Measurement

For the characters, time is not measured in the real time of the players around the gaming table. Time may pass faster or slower in the game world, even to the extent of the GM's mentioning, for example, “a month passes.” Game time is measured in turns (10 minutes), rounds (1 minute) and segments (six seconds). Unless the party is engaged in combat, almost all game time in dungeons is measured in the 10-minute turn.

The GM normally records the passage of time, but a few GMs delegate keeping track of time to a particularly trustworthy player.

Measuring time can be important for many reasons; torches burn down to useless stubs, food is consumed, and wounded characters heal damage as they rest. In dangerous environments, such as wildernesses or dungeons, the GM will typically make periodic checks to see if any “wandering monsters” appear. These checks are normally carried out every so many turns, or hours, or days. Since wandering monsters rarely have treasure, the appearance of wandering monsters serves to reward characters who do not waste time (or more accurately, to punish those who do). See “Exploring the Dungeon” for more on this.

## Movement

Movement rates represent the distance a character (or monster) can move in one minute (1 round). If a character is moving cautiously (e.g., stalking, mapping), this movement rate is divided by 10. A party of adventurers with a movement rate of 90-ft would move at 90-ft per turn through a dungeon (moving cautiously), and in combat (not moving cautiously) they would be moving 90-ft in a round. Running allows the character to double his or her movement rate. During combat, a flat-out run is not possible unless performing a charge or fleeing from combat.

Dividing movement rate by 5 (e.g., 60-ft becomes 12) gives the number of miles the character can travel in a day at walking speed along fairly level terrain. Thus, a character with a movement rate of 120-ft can march 24 miles in one day. Mounted characters use their horse's movement rate rather than their own, of course.

## Encumbrance And Base Movement Rate

Having the right tool for the right task can mean the difference between life and death beneath the ground in an abandoned tomb or dungeon complex. Players may be tempted to load their characters up with too much gear, burdening movement and restricting their fighting capability. Naturally, there is a limit to what an adventurer can reasonably carry, and a character weighted down with every conceivable piece of equipment will soon find that it is best to be selective in choosing how much to carry. If for no other reason, those same sacks and backpacks need to be empty enough to carry out the vast troves of coins and other treasure the party expects to find! Moreover, if the party must flee from pursuers, it may not be important to be the fastest, but it is of crucial importance not to be the slowest!

The most weight a character can carry is 150 lbs, plus whatever additional weight is allowed for the character's strength. This additional weight allowance permitted by the character's strength is simply subtracted from the weight on the table below to determine a character's level of encumbrance. For instance, a character carrying 85 lbs of gear would normally be encumbered; the same character with a 50 lb weight bonus can carry 85 lbs without being encumbered, and between 86-120 lbs in the 90-ft/round movement category. The GM must apply common sense to determinations of encumbrance, taking into account the fact that an extraordinarily bulky item, even if it is quite light, will be so unwieldy as to encumber a character. The bulk of listed armour and items is already taken into account for purposes of convenience.

However, keep in mind that a character wearing armour has a maximum movement rate based on that armour, independent of all weight calculations (due to bulkiness). Thus, armour sets a maximum movement rate and also affects the total weight a character carries.

| Weight Carried | Max. Movement | Surprise   |
|----------------|---------------|--|
| up to 35lbs    | 120-ft/round  | +1 (for armour lighter than chain mail only)                 |
| 36-70 lbs      | 90-ft/round   | Normal bonuses apply   |
| 71-105 lbs     | 60-ft/round   | No normal bonuses apply (but penalties do)                   |
| 106-150 lbs    | 30-ft/round   | No normal bonuses apply (but penalties do); -1 extra penalty |

No movement is possible if attempting to carry more than 150 lbs (as adjusted).

Note that the table above assumes that the character in question has a base 120-ft move. If the character is of small race (such as a dwarf, gnome or halfling), a base move of 90-ft may apply (deduct 30-ft from all movement rates, with a minimum of 30-ft; but do NOT change the effect of encumbrance on surprise/ initiative).

Naturally, characters must have a container if they wish to carry liquids, large numbers of coins, etc. Capacities of sample containers are as follows:

| Container            | Capacity                |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Small Pouch or Purse | 1/4 cubic-ft or 2.5 lbs |

|             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| Large Pouch | 1/2 cubic-ft or 5 lbs |
| Small Sack  | 1 cubic-ft or 10 lbs  |
| Backpack    | 3 cubic-ft or 30 lbs  |
| Large Sack  | 4 cubic-ft or 40 lbs  |
| Waterskin   | 3 pints               |

## Gaining Levels

Upon gaining the requisite number of experience points, a character may increase in level after completing a period of training under the tutelage of a more experienced teacher or, at higher levels, by study or practice. In general, the cost of training will be quite steep, even if the character is high enough level not to need a tutor.

The cost of training will be approximately 1,500 gp per level, and will require 1d4 weeks to complete. Alternatively, the GM may assign a number of weeks of training based on his or her evaluation of the player's and character's performance.

**Random Experience Variable (Optional Rule)\*:** If this optional rule is used, the number of experience points required to gain a level is somewhat variable, representing the vagaries of a character's individual experiences as an adventurer. The base number required to gain a level of experience, shown in the description of each character class, is modified for each level of experience by a random factor. There is a 50% chance that the base number will be reduced, and a 50% chance that it will be increased. Roll a d20 and multiply the result by the level to be attained to determine the exact amount by which the base number will be adjusted.

\* This optional rule is excluded from the Designation of Open Game Content.

## Experience

Experience points ("xp") are awarded by the GM for slaying monsters and recovering treasure. The GM may also choose to award additional experience points in any situation in which he or she feels that the players deserve it, although the authors recommend that such instances should not be overly frequent nor the awards made too large. For treasure recovered, the guideline is 1 xp to the party per gold piece value, assuming that the money in question is successfully extracted from the adventure area and brought to a suitable home base or town.

An exception is magic items, which should result in an experience point award of no more than one tenth of their gold piece value if kept. (Full experience may be awarded if such an item is sold to an NPC.) Award experience for slaying monsters according to the table given hereafter.

Note that if the player character level vastly exceeds the monster level, a proportional reduction should be made. Hence, for example, a tenth level fighter slaying an orc in single combat should expect no more than a single experience point for so doing. Monster levels may be calculated as follows:

| Monster Level | Experience Value |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1             | 20 xp or below   |
| 2             | 21-60            |

|    |                  |
|----|------------------|
| 3  | 61-150           |
| 4  | 151-275          |
| 5  | 276-500          |
| 6  | 501-1,100        |
| 7  | 1,101-3,000      |
| 8  | 3,001-5,250      |
| 9  | 5,251-10,000     |
| 10 | 10,001 or higher |

The “monster level” for experience point purposes should not be confused with the creature's equivalent level for combat purposes.

### Experience point awards for monsters slain

| HD            | Base  | Per hp | Special | Exceptional |
|---------------|-------|--------|---------|-------------|
| Less than 1-1 | 5     | 1      | 3       | 25          |
| 1-1 to 1      | 10    | 1      | 5       | 35          |
| 1+1 to 2      | 30    | 1      | 10      | 50          |
| 2+1 to 3      | 50    | 2      | 15      | 60          |
| 3+1 to 4      | 75    | 3      | 30      | 70          |
| 4+1 to 5      | 110   | 4      | 45      | 80          |
| 5+1 to 6      | 160   | 6      | 70      | 120         |
| 6+1 to 7      | 225   | 8      | 120     | 200         |
| 7+1 to 8      | 350   | 10     | 200     | 300         |
| 8+1 to 9      | 600   | 12     | 300     | 400         |
| 9+1 to 10     | 700   | 13     | 400     | 500         |
| 10+1 to 11    | 900   | 14     | 500     | 600         |
| 11+1 to 12    | 1,200 | 16     | 700     | 850         |
| 12+1 to 13    | 1,500 | 17     | 800     | 1,000       |
| 13+1 to 14    | 1,800 | 18     | 950     | 1,200       |
| 14+1 to 15    | 2,100 | 19     | 1,100   | 1,400       |
| 15+1 to 16    | 2,400 | 20     | 1,250   | 1,600       |
| 16+1 to 17    | 2,700 | 23     | 1,400   | 1,800       |
| 17+1 to 18    | 3,000 | 25     | 1,550   | 2,000       |
| 18+1 to 19    | 3,500 | 28     | 1,800   | 2,250       |
| 19+1 to 20    | 4,000 | 30     | 2,100   | 2,500       |
| 20+1 to 21    | 4,500 | 33     | 2,350   | 2,750       |
| 21+1 and up   | 5,000 | 35     | 2,600   | 3,000       |

“Special” is the bonus for slaying a monster with a special ability. If the monster has several such abilities, several such awards should be made. Examples of special abilities are use of spells or spell-like powers (3rd level and below), invulnerability to non-magical weapons, three or more attacks, and so on. “Exceptional” denotes the bonus for an exceptional ability, such as a dragon's fiery breath, powerful spells or spell-like powers, very low armour class, very high damage potential, or unusual powers such as a gaze which petrifies its victims.

Some character classes allow an experience bonus for high stats.

## Light and Vision

In a dungeon, the party's light source is, of course, crucial. Torches may be blown out by gusts of wind or extinguished by water or even magic. Various light sources are available on the equipment table, and details of the illumination they provide are set forth hereafter.

Bullseye lanterns illuminate 80-ft (in a 10-ft wide beam) and burn a pint of oil every 4 hours. Such lanterns can be masked.

Hooded lanterns illuminate a 30-ft radius and also burn one pint of oil every 4 hours. Magical weapons illuminate 10-20-ft for an infinite period of time (dagger 10-ft, longsword 20-ft). Torches shed 40-ft of illumination and burn out in 6 turns (1 hour). Standard game candles shed 20-ft of illumination and burnout in 30 minutes, although longer-lasting ones may be purchased at additional cost.

Other light sources, such as lamps or magic items, will have their fields of lighting determined by the GM, who may use the information provided in this section as a guideline.

Note that light sources can be seen from much further away than the radius of illumination they shed. Approaching light will warn intelligent creatures of the approach of surface-dwellers, perhaps giving them a chance to prepare. If the party's light source is visible to creatures in the dungeon, the GM should adjust the chance of surprise.

## Infravision

Infravision is the ability to see in the dark and is common to almost all subterranean creatures. Infravision cannot be used within the ambit of any light source. Unless otherwise stated, infravision has a range of 60-ft, although some exceptional subterranean creatures have a longer visual range. Infravision does not detect colours and is of little help while searching or making minute examinations, so sapient creatures such as orcs may well prefer torchlight even if they possess infravision.

## Falling

It is inevitable that at some point a character will fall into a pit, off a wall, or over a cliff. Damage from falling is determined as follows: Falls of less than 5-ft do no damage in game terms; falls of up to 10-ft cause 1d6 damage; if the distance fallen is 20-ft or less, 3d6 damage is inflicted; falls of up to 30-ft cause 6d6, 40-ft is 10d6, 50-ft is 15d6, and falls of over 50-ft cause 20d6 points of damage.

Optionally, kindly GMs may allow a saving throw against falling damage, and if the GM is so inclined and the saving throw is actually passed, the damage taken will be halved.

## Item Saving Throws

Adventurers are not the only targets of the various impacts and other damaging events that accompany a life of danger; the gear they carry is also susceptible to being broken, ignited, frozen,

etc. The table below sets forth saving throws for various substances.

Generally if a player character makes a saving throw, his or her gear is assumed to pass all its saving throws automatically. The table below should be employed only where the player character fails the save.

Note that magical items gain a +2 on all saving throws. Additionally, magic items with a +2 bonus or more gain a +1 saving throw bonus for every magical bonus point over +1. An exception is artifacts and relics; these have saving throws of 2 or 3 in all categories, and even if they fail, usually cannot be so easily destroyed—only temporarily neutralised.

### Item Saving Throw Table

| Item Type         | Acid | Blow, Crushing | Blow, Normal | Cold, Magical | Disintegrate | Electric Shock | Fall (5-ft) | Fireball | Fire, Magical | Fire, Normal | Lightning |
|-------------------|------|----------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|----------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Bone/Ivory        | 11   | 16             | 10           | 2             | 20           | 1              | 6           | 17       | 9             | 3            | 8         |
| Ceramic           | 4    | 18             | 12           | 4             | 19           | 1              | 11          | 5        | 3             | 2            | 2         |
| Cloth             | 12   | 6              | 3            | 1             | 20           | 1              | 2           | 20       | 16            | 13           | 18        |
| Crystal           | 6    | 19             | 14           | 7             | 20           | 5              | 13          | 10       | 6             | 3            | 15        |
| Glass             | 5    | 20             | 15           | 6             | 20           | 1              | 14          | 11       | 7             | 4            | 17        |
| Leather or book   | 10   | 4              | 2            | 3             | 20           | 1              | 1           | 13       | 6             | 4            | 13        |
| Liquid            | 15   | 0              | 0            | 12            | 20           | 15             | 0           | 15       | 14            | 13           | 18        |
| Metal, hard       | 7    | 6              | 2            | 1             | 17           | 1              | 2           | 6        | 2             | 1            | 11        |
| Metal, soft       | 13   | 14             | 9            | 1             | 19           | 1              | 4           | 18       | 13            | 5            | 16        |
| Paper             | 16   | 11             | 6            | 2             | 20           | 1              | 0           | 25       | 21            | 18           | 20        |
| Stone or gem      | 3    | 17             | 7            | 1             | 18           | 2              | 4           | 7        | 3             | 2            | 14        |
| Wood/rope (thick) | 8    | 10             | 3            | 1             | 19           | 1              | 1           | 11       | 7             | 5            | 12        |
| Wood/rope (thin)  | 9    | 13             | 6            | 1             | 20           | 1              | 2           | 15       | 11            | 9            | 10        |

## COMBAT

When the party of adventurers comes into contact with enemies, game-time no longer follows a sequence of turns (representing 10 minutes), but is measured in rounds (representing 1 minute), subdivided into six-second long “segments.” The order of events is as follows:

- Determine Surprise (d6)
- Declare Spells and General Actions
- Determine Initiative (d6, highest result is the winner, each party acts in the segment indicated by the other party's die roll)
- Party with initiative acts first (casting spells, attacking, etc.), and results take effect (other than spells, which have casting times to complete before they take effect). Note: Some actions may allow the other side to “interrupt” with an action such as a fleeing attack or attacking charging opponents with spears set against a charge.
- Party that lost initiative acts, and results take effect (other than spells, which take effect when casting time is completed)
- The round is complete; declare spells and general actions for the next round if the battle has not been resolved.

**1. Determine Surprise:** If a group of combatants is surprised, its members are basically caught flat-footed and unable to act during the first few seconds of a battle.

Surprise is checked only once per combat, at the beginning of an encounter. Each side rolls a d6. If the result is a 1, the group is surprised for one segment. If the result is a 2, the group is surprised for two segments. If the result is a 3-6, the group is not surprised. In some cases, monsters or particular character classes may have special rules for surprise (e.g. some monsters cannot be surprised, others are stealthy enough that the party may be surprised on a roll of higher than 2). If a party of adventurers has alerted monsters to its presence (by hammering away at a door for a round or two, for example), the monsters will not need to make a surprise roll at all; however, merely being alert to the possibility of danger is not enough to avoid making a surprise roll. If neither of the opposing forces is surprised, play moves on to the regular combat round, described below.

If one side is surprised while another is not, the unsurprised party may act for a number of “surprise” segments. For example, if the party rolls a 1 and the monsters roll a 2, the party is surprised for one segment, the monsters are surprised for two segments, and thus the party has one surprise segment in which to act. If the party rolls a 2 and the monsters roll a 5, the party is surprised for 2 segments and the monsters (who, having rolled a 5 were not surprised at all) have both of those 2 surprise segments in which to act. Actions that would normally happen over the course of a round may be completed in one surprise segment: talking, attacking, charging, closing to melee, beginning a spell, etc., provided that it is possible for the action to take place during a single segment. In other words, a character cannot make a minute-long speech during that six seconds, nor can a spell be fully cast unless it is a one-segment spell.

A character's surprise bonus (see “Dexterity”) acts to negate surprise segments if the character is surprised (or to create them, if the number is a penalty). Thus, a character with a +2 surprise bonus whose side rolled a 2 for surprise (normally a situation in which the character would be surprised for two segments) is not surprised. This can lead to a situation in which a party of adventurers is surprised with the exception of one member. For example, if the monsters rolled a 1, the party rolled a 2, and one party member had a +2 surprise bonus, the situation will resolve as follows:

- The party member is not surprised at all, because two segments of surprise are negated by his +2 bonus.
- The monsters are surprised for one segment, so the unsurprised party member may act during that first surprise segment.
- In the second surprise segment, the monsters are no longer surprised, but the rest of the party is still surprised (having rolled a 2), so both the monsters and the one unsurprised character can all take action during the second surprise segment.

Dexterity cannot create surprise, only alter the number of segments for which surprise lasts.

If a monster surprises on more than a 2 in 6 (some monster descriptions may contain text such as “surprises on 1-3”), it is possible for the monster to gain more than two segments of surprise. Against a monster that surprises on 1-3, if the party rolls a 3 and the monster is not surprised, the monster would have three surprise segments in which to act.

**2. Declare Spells and General Actions:** Before the two sides roll initiative, spell casters must state what spells (if any) they will be casting in that round. As the round proceeds, the spell caster may elect not to cast the spell, but may not substitute another action. This is simply because the mental preparations for casting a spell are so arduous that the caster cannot switch focus quickly enough to change actions. Non-spell casters should also tell the GM, in general terms, what they will be doing: “attacking with a sword,” “using my bow,” “climbing the wall,” etc.

Before the players do this, the GM should already have formed a similar outline of the monsters' strategy; the GM should not base the monsters' actions on what he or she already knows the players will be doing.

**3. Determine Initiative:** After any surprise segments are resolved and spell casting is declared, the first combat round begins. At the beginning of a combat round, each side rolls initiative on a d6. The roll represents the six second segment of the round in which the OTHER group will be able to act; hence, the higher roll is the better roll (as the other party will act later). If the party rolls a 6 for initiative, and the monsters roll a 1, this means that the party will be acting in segment 1, and the monsters will not act until the sixth segment of the 10-segment round. Since a combat round is 10 segments long, and the initiative roll only covers the first six segments of the round, there are four remaining segments in the round after the two sides have already taken their actions: these remaining four segments are still important because spells may take effect during this time, and some combatants might “hold” (choose to delay) their actions, waiting to act until these later segments.

The dexterity bonus for surprise is not added to an individual's initiative for melee attacks, but if a character has a missile weapon in hand, he or she applies his or her missile attack bonus as a bonus to his or her initiative (as well as to the attack roll).

Initiative rolls may result in a tie. When this happens, both sides are considered to be acting simultaneously. The GM may handle this situation in any way he or she chooses—with one caveat. The damage inflicted by combatants during simultaneous initiative is inflicted even if one of the combatants dies during the round. It is possible for two combatants to kill each other during a simultaneous initiative round! Under any other circumstance, of course, the effects of damage inflicted during that segment will take effect immediately—a goblin killed in the first segment of the round will be dead (and thus unable to attack) by the time the fifth segment of the round arrives.

Some characters (and creatures) may have more than one attack routine. This does not refer to a monster that normally makes multiple attacks in a round—all of these attacks are considered to be part of one attack routine. However, a fighter whose level grants him an additional attack is considered to be making a second entire attack routine. This is perhaps most clearly seen if the reader envisions a fighter who uses a sword in one hand and a dagger in the other. These two attacks are part of an attack routine—and if the fighter is of high enough level or under the influence of a haste spell, he or she may also gain an entire additional attack routine. A creature or character with multiple attack routines cannot use the second attack routine until after the other side's initiative segment has been resolved.

Once the party with initiative has acted, the party that lost initiative may then take action.

**Note about spells:** Spells have a casting time, the number of segments (or rounds, turns, etc.) required to cast the spell. The spell caster does not actually begin casting the spell until his or her initiative segment. That segment is the first segment of the casting time. The spell does not “go off” until the casting has been completed.

**Example:** Halvaine the Arcane's party is in battle with a group of orcs. At the beginning of the round, Halvaine's player declares that the magic user will cast a spell with a 2 segment casting time. The party rolls a 5 for initiative, and the GM rolls a 4 for the orcs. Halvaine thus begins casting in the fourth segment of the round (as the ORCS rolled a 4, so Halvaine's party is acting in segment 4). The orcs attack in the fifth segment (as Halvaine's party rolled a 5), and Halvaine's spell will go off in the sixth segment (as his initiative segment is 4, and he adds the casting time of 2)—provided, of course, that the orcish attack in the fifth segment does not interrupt and thus spoil his casting.

## Combat Actions

Combat actions normally should be declared by the players, and decided by the GM, prior to the initiative die being rolled. Certain actions, of course, are so integral to the game that methods for their resolution are set forth as rules. These actions are: fleeing, negotiating, holding initiative, firing missiles, setting weapons against a charge, attacking, casting spells, and engaging in unarmed combat. Each of these common actions is described below.

**Charge:** Charging into combat allows the attacker to move and then attack in the same round. A charge is made at twice the normal movement rate (and must terminate within the 10-ft melee range of the target). If the defender has a longer weapon than the attacker, the defender attacks first (unless the defender has already acted in this round). The attacker gains no dexterity bonus against such an attack (and characters with no dexterity bonus receive a +1 AC penalty). Additionally, if the defender has a weapon set against the charge (see below), he or she will inflict additional damage with a successful hit against the charging attacker.

Assuming that the charging character survives, he or she gains +2 “to hit” on his or her attack. Characters may only perform a charge once every 10 rounds (i.e. once per turn). Characters who are at the maximum encumbrance category may not charge unless they are mounted and the mount is below the maximum encumbrance category.

An attacker riding a warhorse or other combat-trained mount and equipped with a lance inflicts double the damage rolled on the charge round. (Although the weapon damage is doubled, any bonus for strength, magic, specialisation or other such modifier is not.)

**Closing into Combat:** When two groups of combatants are not within the 10-ft melee range, the attackers may choose either to charge into combat or to advance more cautiously, closing into combat. Closing into combat does not allow the character to make an attack roll that round; the cautious advance does not generate the opening to make a significant attack. However, neither may the character's opponent attack until the round after closing. When closing into combat, the character may advance the full amount of his or her movement.

**Fighting Retreat:** A character may retreat backward out of combat, maintaining his or her defence, although the attacker may follow if not otherwise engaged. It is possible to parry while doing so, but not to attack. This manoeuvre may be used to “switch places” with another party member who is in combat, the first party member joining battle with the enemy to prevent the enemy's pursuit while the second character makes a fighting retreat.

**Fleeing from Combat:** Often, discretion is the better part of valour, and the characters will choose to exercise the said discretion at top speed. If a character is in melee combat and runs away, his or her opponent(s) may make an immediate additional attack at +4 to hit.

**Hold Initiative:** Holding initiative is simply waiting until the other side has acted before doing anything.

**Melee Attack:** A melee attack is an attack with a hand-held weapon such as a sword, halberd, or dagger. A character's strength bonuses “to hit” and on damage (see “Strength”) are added to melee attacks. It is only possible to make a melee attack when the two combatants are within 10-ft of each other. Two combatants within 10-ft of each other are considered to be “engaged.” When faced with more than one opponent, it is not possible to pick which opponent will be the one receiving the attack; in the rapid give and take of melee, any one of the opponents might be the one to let down his

guard for a moment. When a character is in melee with multiple opponents, the target of an attack roll must be determined randomly, but note that characters or creatures with multiple attacks that are part of the same routine (such as a bear with a claw/claw/bite attack or a character wielding a sword and dagger) must make all attacks against the same opponent unless otherwise specified in the relevant monster's entry.

**Missile Attacks:** Missile attacks are attacks with a ranged weapon such as a crossbow, sling, or thrown axe. When using missiles to attack into a melee, it is not possible to choose which particular target will receive the attack; the target should be determined randomly from among all melee participants, and the missile-firer could well hit a friend. A character's dexterity bonus for missile attacks is added to the "to hit" roll when the character is using missile weapons. If a character has a missile weapon in hand, his or her missile bonus is also added to his or her initiative roll, allowing the character to potentially attack first even if his or her party has lost the initiative roll.

**Negotiation and Diplomacy:** Some combats can be averted with a few chosen words (including lies). If the party is outmatched, or the monsters don't seem likely to be carrying much in the way of loot, the party might elect to brazen their way through in an attempt to avoid combat (or at least delay it until favourable conditions arise).

**Parrying:** A character who parries cannot attack, but may subtract his or her "to hit" bonus from his or her opponent's attack roll. Parrying may be used in combination with a fighting retreat. Parrying only has value to a character with a strength or specialisation-related bonus "to hit".

**Spells:** Spell casting begins in the spell caster's initiative segment, and the spell is completed at the end of the casting time. It is possible to cast a spell while within melee range of an opponent (10-ft), but if the spell caster suffers damage while casting a spell, the spell is lost. While casting a spell, the caster receives no dexterity bonus to his or her armour class.

**Set Weapon Against Charge:** Certain weapons can be "set" against a charge, which is a simple matter of bracing the weapon against the floor or some other stationary object. A character choosing to set his or her weapon against a charge cannot attack unless an opponent charges, but the weapon will inflict double damage against a charging opponent. A charge is any attack that allows the attacker to move and attack, and thus includes leaping attacks that may be made by some monsters.

Weapons that may be set against a charge include spears, lances (when used dismounted), most pole arms, and tridents.

**Unarmed Combat:** Brawling attacks, such as those conducted with fist, foot, or dagger pommel, will normally inflict 1d2 points of damage. All characters are automatically presumed to be proficient with such weapons, i.e. a proficiency slot is not required to make such an attack without penalty.

**Two other unarmed attack forms are possible:** Grappling attacks and Overbearing attacks. A successful grappling attack inflicts 0-1 (1d2-1) points of damage, but also restrains the target and prevents him or her from fighting. The chance of breaking a successful grapple should be determined according to the relative strengths of the creatures concerned. (An ogre could restrain a kobold almost indefinitely, and would be able to break free of the kobold's grasp at will.)

Overbearing attacks are Grappling attacks exercised at the end of a Charge (see "Charge" above). If successful, the opponent is prone rather than restrained. Otherwise the attack is treated as a grapple.

## Combat Modifiers

**Concealment:** Concealment is anything that obscures an opponent's vision, such as tree limbs or smoke, but does not physically block incoming attacks (which would be considered Cover rather than Concealment; see below). The GM must decide whether the defender is about a quarter (-1 to AC), half (-2 to AC), three-quarters (-3 to AC), or nine tenths (-4 to AC) concealed.

**Cover:** Cover is protection behind something that can actually block incoming attacks, such as a wall or arrow slit. Cover bonuses are as follows:

25% cover: -2 AC 50% cover: -4 AC 75% cover: -7 AC 90% cover: -10 AC

An attack from the unshielded flank denies the target any defensive advantages from a shield. An attack from the rear flank negates the defensive value of the shield and also negates any dexterity bonus.

**Invisible opponent:** An invisible opponent can only be attacked if the general location is known, and the attack is at -4 to hit. If an opponent is invisible to the attacker, he or she cannot be attacked from behind (or from the flank). Note that more powerful monsters (those with sensitive smell or hearing, or more than six hit dice) will frequently be able to detect invisible opponents; the GM should determine the chance of this according to the creature concerned and the situation. Powerful magical monsters, or those with more than 11 hit dice, will almost always be able to see invisible creatures normally.

**Prone Opponent:** Attacks against a prone opponent negate the benefit of a shield, negate dexterity bonuses, and are made at +4 to hit.

**Rear Attack:** An attack from directly behind an opponent negates the benefit of a shield, negates dexterity bonuses, and is made at +2 to hit.

**Sleeping Opponent:** Sleeping opponents (natural sleep, not magical sleep) may be attacked with the same chance to kill as if the attacker were an assassin. The effect of magical sleep is described under the entry for the *sleep* spell.

**Stunned Opponent:** A stunned opponent receives no shield or dexterity bonus, and may be attacked at +4.

**Two-Weapon Fighting:** If a character desires to fight with one weapon in each hand, the off-hand weapon must be either a dagger or a hand axe. The weapon in the primary hand attacks with a -2 modifier, and the off-hand weapon attacks at -4. The character's dexterity bonus (or penalty) for missile weapons is added to both attacks. Thus, a character with a dexterity of 3 would be attacking at -5/-7. However, although penalties can be offset, this rule can never result in a bonus to attacks! The off-hand weapon cannot be used to affect parrying.

## Attack and Saving Throw Matrices for Monsters

Most monsters use the attack matrices of fighters. The GM should convert the monster's Hit Dice to a level equivalent according to the following guidelines:

| Monster HD | Equivalent Level |
|------------|------------------|
|------------|------------------|

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Up to 1-1      | 0  |
| 1-1            | 1  |
| 1              | 2  |
| 1+1 to 2       | 3  |
| 2+1 to 3       | 4  |
| 3+1 to 4       | 5  |
| 4+1 to 5       | 6  |
| 5+1 to 6       | 7  |
| 6+1 to 7       | 8  |
| 7+1 to 8       | 9  |
| 8+1 to 9       | 10 |
| 9+1 to 10      | 11 |
| 10+1 to 11     | 12 |
| 11+1 to 12     | 13 |
| 12+1 to 13     | 14 |
| 13+1 to 14     | 15 |
| 14+1 to 15     | 16 |
| 15+1 to 16     | 17 |
| 16+1 to 17     | 18 |
| 17+1 to 18     | 19 |
| 18+1 to 19     | 20 |
| 19+1 or higher | 21 |

The above table is also used to determine the monster's saving throws. Most monsters will save as fighters, but the GM should use discretion in following this guideline; in cases where the monster clearly possesses the abilities of another class, consideration should be given to using that matrix instead. (A good example might be a goblin shaman, which could save as a cleric instead of a fighter.)

In the case of powerful monsters that duplicate the abilities of several classes, the most favourable table should be used. (For example, a spell-casting dragon might save as a magic user or a fighter, whichever is better.) The level at which monsters cast spells is also normally determined by their hit dice unless the creature's description indicates otherwise. For example, a magic-using dragon with 11 HD would cast spells as a 12th level spell caster.

Huge but unintelligent creatures may have their equivalent level reduced for the purposes of saving throws, subject to the GM's discretion; creatures such as dinosaurs would be appropriate for this. On rarer occasions, it may also make sense to reduce the creature's effective level for the purposes of attack tables also; this might apply to a herbivorous dinosaur, for example.

Please note that certain creatures have a special bonus to their effective attack level. Stirges, for example, are creatures with 1+1 hit die that attack as equivalent level 5.

Generally, the GM should take account of situations such as positional bonuses. For example, where a group of monsters is attacking the party from a height advantage using spears, the GM may well wish to increase their effective equivalent level by 1.

## Turning the Undead

Clerics and paladins can turn undead, causing them to flee or even turning them to dust by the power of religious faith. An evil cleric can also turn a paladin, but cannot destroy the paladin by turning. Evil clerics may choose to control the undead instead of turning them. If an evil cleric gains a result of "D" on the table, the undead creature falls under the cleric's control for 24 hours. Normally 2d6 creatures are affected by Turn Undead. Exceptions are paladins and Type 13 creatures, of which only 1d2 are affected, and results of "D", which affect 1d6+6 creatures.

Turning lasts for 3d4 rounds. While turned, the creature must move away from the cleric at its fastest possible movement rate. It will attack a creature that is directly blocking its escape route, but otherwise may not fight.

The cleric or paladin must be holding his or her holy symbol to make a turning attempt. In most cases this will preclude attacking on the same round, and the cleric must sheathe or drop his or her weapon (or else set down his or her shield).

To turn undead, roll a d20 on the Turning Undead Table. If the result is equal to or higher than the number shown, the attempt is successful.

*Exception:* Certain religions exist where the cleric's holy symbol is also his or her weapon (for example, some GMs may permit clerics of the god Thor to carry a hammer which doubles as a holy symbol). In this case, the cleric will be able to make a turn undead attempt with his or her weapon in hand, although even this situation does not empower the cleric to attack and attempt to turn undead in the same round. If the cleric is successful in a turning attempt, he or she may try again next round. If the cleric fails, no further turning attempt may be made during this encounter.

**Optional Rule:** An evil cleric may control no more Hit Dice worth of undead than his or her level of experience; thus a 9th level evil cleric could control no more than two wights, for example.

### Turning Undead Table

| Type of Undead | Example  | Cleric Level |    |    |    |    |    |      |       |     |    |    |
|----------------|----------|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|------|-------|-----|----|----|
|                |          | 3            | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9-13 | 14-18 | 19+ |    |    |
| Type 1         | Skeleton | 10           | 7  | 4  | T  | T  | D  | D    | D     | D   | D  | D  |
| Type 2         | Zombie   | 13           | 10 | 7  | T  | T  | D  | D    | D     | D   | D  | D  |
| Type 3         | Ghoul    | 16           | 13 | 10 | 4  | T  | T  | D    | D     | D   | D  | D  |
| Type 4         | Shadow   | 19           | 16 | 13 | 7  | 4  | T  | T    | D     | D   | D  | D  |
| Type 5         | Wight    | 20           | 19 | 16 | 10 | 7  | 4  | T    | T     | D   | D  | D  |
| Type 6         | Ghast    | —            | 20 | 19 | 13 | 10 | 7  | 4    | T     | T   | D  | D  |
| Type 7         | Wraith   | —            | —  | 20 | 16 | 13 | 10 | 7    | 4     | T   | T  | D  |
| Type 8         | Mummy    | —            | —  | —  | 19 | 16 | 13 | 10   | 7     | 4   | T  | D  |
| Type 9         | Spectre  | —            | —  | —  | 20 | 19 | 16 | 13   | 10    | 7   | T  | T  |
| Type 10        | Vampire  | —            | —  | —  | —  | 20 | 19 | 16   | 13    | 10  | 7  | 4  |
| Type 11        | Ghost    | —            | —  | —  | —  | —  | 20 | 19   | 16    | 13  | 10 | 7  |
| Type 12        | Lich     | —            | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | 20   | 19    | 16  | 13 | 10 |
| Type 13        | Fiend    | —            | —  | —  | —  | —  | —  | —    | 20    | 19  | 16 | 13 |

For the purposes of evil clerics turning paladins, paladins are treated as Type 8 if they are level 1-2,

Type 9 if level 3-4, Type 10 if level 5-6, Type 11 if level 7-8, Type 12 if level 9-10 and Type 13 if level 11 or higher. However, paladins cannot be destroyed by turning.

If the number on the die is equal to or greater than the number shown on the table, the creature is turned and will flee.

If the table indicates "T", the undead creature is automatically turned, and will flee.

If the table indicates "D", the undead creature is automatically destroyed and will crumble to dust.

For evil clerics, a result of "D" indicates that the undead are forced into the cleric's command for a period of 24 hours.

## Damage and Death

When a character or creature is hit, the amount of damage is deducted from his or her hit points. When hit points reach 0, the character is unconscious and will continue to lose one hit point per round from blood loss until death occurs at -10 hp. Note that any additional damage suffered by an unconscious character (aside from bleeding) will kill him or her instantly. The blood loss of 1 hit point per round may be stopped immediately in the same round that aid of some kind is administered to the wounded character. Being knocked unconscious is quite serious; even after returning to 1 or more hp (by means of a healing spell, potion, or natural rest) the character will remain in a coma for 1-6 turns and must rest for a minimum of one week before he or she will be capable of resuming any sort of strenuous activity, mental or physical. If a character is reduced to -6 hit points or below, the scars of the wound will likely be borne for the rest of the character's life.

Characters who are slain may be raised from the dead if a cleric of sufficient level is available to perform the casting (exception: elves do not have souls, and are unaffected by the spells raise dead or resurrection). If no such character is available in the party, as will be the case for most low-level parties, the group may choose to approach a NPC High Priest for assistance in raising a dead character. The NPC will always charge a fee for such a casting, typically at least 1,000 gp.

## Natural Healing

A character will recover 1 hit point per day of uninterrupted rest. However, if the character has a constitution penalty to hp, before rest will begin to affect the character's hp the character must rest for a number of days equal to the constitution penalty. A character with high constitution gains a commensurate benefit after resting for one week; the number of hp regained during the second week will be increased by the amount of the character's hp bonus at the start of the week. Four weeks of rest will return any character to full hp regardless of how many hp the character has lost.

## Subdual Damage

A weapon may be used to beat down, rather than kill, an opponent. When the player desires, damage inflicted can be composed of half "real" damage and half "subdual" damage that does not kill. Such subdual damage is recovered at a rate of 1 hp per hour.

Not all monsters may be subdued. Generally only humanoids and special creatures such as dragons will be subject to such attacks. Some creatures may voluntarily agree to accept defeat from subdual damage (this is common in knightly tournaments) but in this case, subdual must normally be agreed with the foe in advance.

## Life Energy Levels and Level Drain

Certain monsters, magic items and spells have the power to drain “life energy levels”, perform a “level drain”, or an “energy drain” (these phrases are used interchangeably in the OSRIC rules). If a player character is drained of a life energy level, he or she loses one complete level of experience and is placed at the beginning point of the new level. If the character is multi-classed or dual-classed, then the highest level of experience attained by that character is lost. If the character has two equal levels, then the level lost should be determined randomly. A player character drained below level 1 is slain (and may rise as some kind of undead creature). Non-player characters lose a level or hit die, as applicable.

## Morale

Certain monsters, such as trolls or most undead creatures, are fearless and never need to check morale. The majority, however, will not continue to fight a hopeless battle, seeking to retreat, surrender, or flee. The GM determines when morale checks should be made. Generally, morale should be checked when it becomes clear that the monsters are losing the fight, or taking unacceptable losses. No more than two morale checks should be made per battle, however; if the monsters pass a second morale check, they are assumed to be fanatical and will fight to the death.

The base morale for most monsters is 50%, plus 5% per hit die of the monster. (Thus for example a monster with 8+1 hit dice gets  $[8 \times 5\% = ] +40\%$ , for a total base morale of 90%.) The GM should adjust this according to how cowardly or heroic the monster might be, and also according to the prevailing circumstances. For example, if the monster is very cowardly and fighting opponents who are inflicting serious damage on its fellows without taking any casualties, then the GM might impose a -30% penalty to its morale check. If it is elite and fighting close to its battle standard, the GM might allow a bonus of +10%.

Player characters do not need to check morale. However, hirelings, henchmen, and men-at-arms should be checked for normally. In this case the NPC's morale may be affected by his or her liege's charisma score and/or former conduct towards the NPC; the henchman's alignment may also be taken into account. (As a rule, Chaotic Evil henchmen are much more likely to betray their masters than Lawful Good ones.)

**Effects of Morale Check Failure:** Creatures that fail their morale check by a margin of 25% or less will generally seek to make a fighting withdrawal. If they fail by 26% to 50%, they will generally turn and flee; a failure by 51% or higher indicates that the creature surrenders. However, the GM should use logic in conjunction with this guideline, taking into account the creature's intelligence and what it knows. A cornered creature that cannot flee, for example, or a monster that knows that its opponents move faster than it does, will surrender rather than make a futile attempt at flight.

**No Quarter:** Any creature subject to morale that sees surrender is not accepted, sees a prisoner being slain by the other side, or has some reason to believe it will be executed if it surrenders, will

never surrender, regardless of other considerations. Such a creature will fight to the death if it cannot flee.

### Table of Common Morale Check Modifiers (all cumulative)

| Situation                                  | Modifier |
|--|----------|
| Per friend killed, surrendered or fled     | +5%      |
| Own side taken 25% casualties              | +5%      |
| Numerical inferiority                      | +10%     |
| Own side taken 50% casualties              | +15%     |
| Own side greatly outnumbered (2-1 or more) | +20%     |
| Own leader hors de combat                  | +25%     |
| Per foe killed, surrendered or fled        | -5%      |
| Own side inflicted 25% casualties          | -5%      |
| Numerical superiority                      | -10%     |
| Own side inflicted 50% casualties          | -15%     |

## Poison, Disease and Insanity

Poisons commonly encountered in OSRIC-compatible games include animal venoms (such as snake and spider bites), vegetable toxins (often used to coat poison needles or similar devices on traps), and essentially magical poisons such as clouds of poisonous gas. Generally, when a player character ingests or inhales the poison, or it otherwise enters his or her bloodstream, he or she must roll a saving throw against poison (sometimes with a modifier—up to +2 for a relatively weak toxin such as that of a Large Spider, down to -4 for a particularly lethal one). If the saving throw is failed, the character dies.

In practice death from such cases is not instantaneous, although the character is typically incapacitated immediately. There is time for *slow poison* or *neutralise poison* to be cast on the character, if this is done reasonably soon (say, within about 15 minutes depending on the strength of the venom or toxin involved).

If the character dies as a result of poison, the poison must somehow be flushed from his or her bloodstream before any kind of raise dead or resurrection can succeed.

The general rule is that characters cannot employ poisons as easily as monsters. Venom taken from a creature's poison glands will, for game purposes, typically begin to lose effectiveness immediately and have become completely denatured within a few hours. Some characters—often assassins—may learn how to create vegetable-based toxins that can last longer if kept in the correct way, but lethal toxins will still need to be handled with great care. The GM should determine whether any given activity involving the poison runs a risk of the handler receiving a tiny cut, scratch or nick (requiring an immediate poison save). Certain good aligned character classes, such as paladins, may not use poison and will object to their companions using it.

Finally, some creatures—particularly powerful ones such as dragons—are so large, and their body chemistries are so different, that poisons will not normally work against them.

The principle is that poisons in the hands of player characters change the balance of the game in undesirable ways, so players should be discouraged from using them.

Diseases in OSRIC-compatible games often come from monsters, such as mummies or giant rats, in which case the chance of disease and its effects are described in the relevant creature text. There are a few other instances where disease may be contracted that are explained here.

First, plagues (such as the mediæval bubonic plague or Black Death) may occasionally spread across the countryside. A character who comes into contact with plague will need to save against poison to avoid succumbing him- or herself. If the character saves, any future saving throws against the same disease will be made at +4. If he or she fails, then after an incubation period of 2d8 days, he or she will suffer a penalty of -1d6 on all characteristics and against all die rolls for the course of the disease, which lasts a further 2d8 days. If either of the dice show an "8" then the character dies at the end of this period, otherwise he or she recovers at the rate of 1 point less each day until cured. Further saving throws against the same disease will be made at +4.

Second, certain wounds can become infected. This applies where the GM feels it appropriate, but generally where a character with an open wound engages in high-risk activity such as exploring a sewer, a saving throw versus poison should be required, or else the character will become infected. The effects of infection in game terms are the same as plague, except that the onset time is measured in hours rather than days.

Insanity is possible as a result of certain spells or monster attacks. A character who becomes insane will receive an insanity from the table below. The kind of insanity may be decided by the GM or rolled randomly.

| D%    | Insanity          |
|-------|-------------------|
| 01-06 | Agoraphobia       |
| 07-13 | Alcoholism        |
| 14-20 | Amnesia           |
| 21-26 | Anorexia          |
| 27-33 | Catatonia         |
| 34-40 | Claustrophobia    |
| 41-46 | Dementia          |
| 47-54 | Homicidal Mania   |
| 55-60 | Kleptomania       |
| 61-66 | Manic-Depressive  |
| 67-74 | Megalomania       |
| 75-80 | Paranoia          |
| 81-86 | Pathological Liar |
| 87-93 | Phobia            |
| 94-97 | Schizophrenia     |
| 98-00 | Suicidal Mania    |

**Homicidal Mania:** The character has an insatiable urge to kill. The victim must be of the same race as the insane character and normally (75%) of the opposite gender. The must kill at least once a week until cured.

**Kleptomania:** The character has an insatiable urge to steal. The character will take any opportunity to pocket a gem, coin or small magic item. If the stolen objects are taken away from the character, there is a 50% chance that he or she will become violent.

**Manic-Depressive:** During the manic phase (which lasts 2d6 days), the character will become very

excited about something—virtually anything will do. The character will select a goal (which may be a very inappropriate one) and focus totally on achieving it. Then there is an intermediary phase, which lasts 2d6 days, and a depressive phase, in which the character will always assume that there is no chance of success. A depressive character will want to remain indoors in a place of safety, and in bed if possible. The depressive phase lasts 2d6 days, followed by which there is another 2d6-day intermediary phase before the cycle begins again.

**Megalomania:** The character will believe that he or she is the best—at everything. He or she will demand to be leader of the party, will issue peremptory orders to other party members, and there is a 50% chance that the megalomaniac will become violent if these are not obeyed. Any suggestion that he or she is not the leader and/or nor the best-qualified person for any particular job will always result in violence from the megalomaniac.

**Paranoia:** Paranoia is very dangerous in adventuring situations. The paranoid will believe that “they” are out to get him or her, and will suspect anyone and everyone of working for “them”—particularly party members. The paranoid will generally disobey orders and ignore suggestions on the assumption that they are intended to cause the character harm. Eventually the character will flee his or her group or normal social circle.

**Pathological Liar:** The pathological liar is concerned with deception, not necessarily untruth. Thus, he or she is capable of telling the truth, but will only normally do so if he or she will not be believed. Otherwise, the insane character must respond to all questions with lies.

**Phobia:** The character suffers from a strong and completely irrational fear of some substance, creature, or situation.

**Schizophrenia:** The character's personality splits into 1d3 separate personalities, each of which may have a different alignment or even class. Typically the personalities are not aware of each other.

**Suicidal Mania:** The character is driven to self-harm. He or she may never flee from combat or any kind of dangerous situation. Faced with a pit or chasm, the insane character must jump over it; faced with a chest, he or she must open it; faced with an enemy, he or she must fight it, etc.

## Hirelings and Henchmen

As player characters advance in wealth and power, they are increasingly likely to require the Semi-permanent services of various sorts of non-player character. In addition to less formal associations and patronages, a character may expect to have the opportunity to acquire and retain hirelings and henchmen. In general, but not in every case, the former are unclassed zero level characters incapable of conventional advancement by level, whilst the latter are classed characters, initially of low level, but capable of level advancement.

In almost all instances, hirelings and henchmen must be entirely equipped by those they serve, and contribute nothing but themselves. Should a player character seek to engage the services of an already equipped non-player character, the game master would be well advised to ensure that the value of any equipment be paid to the prospective retainer as a stipend prior to commencement of service.

It is typically assumed that hirelings are human; if non-human hirelings are sought, then the appropriate costs, terms of service, and availability must be decided in accordance with the dictates

of a given milieu.

## Standard Hirelings

The short term services of simple craftsmen and labourers are relatively easily procured in large settlements, but even small villages are usually able to supply something in the way of this sort of hireling. It is more difficult to find individuals willing to take service for longer than a few days, especially if considerable travel is involved. If a lengthy term of service is proposed, it is likely that only one in every six such hirelings will agree, though the offer of additional monies may increase the probability of acceptance. Under normal circumstances, a reasonable offer might be an additional two or three day's pay, which could be expected to increase the probability of agreement to as much as one in every two.

Rates of payment do not take into account the cost of materials for the undertaking of construction or the creation of items. The figuring of such costs is mainly left up to each game master, but a reasonable guideline for an item would be about ten percent of the cost of the finished product. Furthermore, monthly rates of payment assume that the hireling is provided with lodgings and that his other day to day needs are attended to; if such is not the case, then the game master will have to account for the lack.

| Hireling     | Daily Rate | Monthly Rate |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Carpenter    | 3 sp       | 40 sp        |
| Cook         | 1 sp       | 20 sp        |
| Groom        | 1 sp       | 20 sp        |
| Labourer     | 1 sp       | 20 sp        |
| Leatherer    | 2 sp       | 30 sp        |
| Limner       | 10 sp      | 200 sp       |
| Linkboy      | 1 sp       | 20 sp        |
| Mason        | 4 sp       | 60 sp        |
| Pack Handler | 2 sp       | 30 sp        |
| Servant      | 3 sp       | 50 sp        |
| Tailor       | 2 sp       | 30 sp        |
| Teamster     | 5 sp       | 100 sp       |

**Carpenter:** Skilled in the working of wood, a carpenter might be retained to construct anything from a table to a palisade. Their expertise is also invaluable for the manufacturing of shields and similar items.

**Cook:** Familiar with the preparation of various types of food, a good cook sometimes also knows a little of herb lore.

**Groom:** Proficient in the care of horses, an attentive groom can usually tell a good mount from a bad; also known as an ostler or stable hand.

**Labourer:** Essentially unskilled, labourers are suitable for only the most menial sorts of work; this category includes bearers and porters, each of which is able to carry up to fifty pounds or twice that if a pole or other contrivance is utilised.

**Leatherer:** Capable of producing a wide range of leather goods, such as packs, belts or riding gear; a

leatherer is indispensable for the making of scabbards, sheathes, shields and the other leather components of arms and armour.

**Limner:** Adept in the painting of signs and the illumination of heraldic devices, amongst other similar tasks.

**Linkboy:** Usually hired to bear a lantern or torch, a linkboy is typically a youth, but older individuals are not unknown.

**Mason:** Expert in the working of stone or plaster, masons are essential for the construction of many significant buildings and fortifications.

**Pack Handler:** Practiced in the burdening, handling and unburdening of various pack animals.

**Servant:** Typically serving as valets, butlers, maids, messengers or simple lackeys, servants are expected to look to the needs of their master.

**Tailor:** Accomplished in the repair and making of clothes or other cloth items, such as surcoats, capes or hats; the services of a tailor are also required for the production of various types of textile based armour and coverings.

**Teamster:** Experienced drivers of carts and wagons, teamsters are usually experts at loading and unloading their vehicles, as well as handling the animals with which they are familiar.

## Expert Hirelings

Obtaining the services of very skilled craftsmen and other professional servitors typically involves the expenditure of considerable time and resources. Whilst it is possible to retain such hirelings for short periods, few will agree to a term of less than a month and most expect to serve considerably longer. It is therefore usual for expert hirelings to only be retained by player characters who have already established a stronghold or the equivalent. The maintenance of a stronghold is assumed to include any common hirelings necessary, but expert hirelings must be accounted for separately.

Whilst some may certainly be found in small villages, the probability of finding expert hirelings willing to take service with a player character is considerably higher in larger settlements, such as towns and cities, where suitable candidates exist in greater numbers. Exactly where individual hirelings may be located varies, but craftsmen are typically found in or near their respective artisan quarters, whilst mercenaries may be sought at inns and taverns. Successful recruitment depends on the terms offered relative to the difficulties and risks involved in the proposal.

The below listed monthly costs encompass wages, clothing, lodgings and provisions, as well as any basic equipment, but not such expenses as the arms and armour due to a man at arms, which must be provided separately. Furthermore, as with standard hirelings, additional monies must be paid to cover the costs of materials and tools in order for craftsmen to produce items, or in the case of certain other special instances. The monthly costs assume that the hirelings in question are quartered in or near the stronghold of a player character and may not suffice in other circumstances. Moreover, a higher rate of pay or otherwise favourable treatment will be required to improve the morale and loyalty of a hireling.

| Hireling  | Monthly Wage |
|-----------|--------------|
| Alchemist | 6,000 sp     |

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Armourer                   | 2,000 sp |
| Blacksmith                 | 600 sp   |
| Engineer (Architect)       | 2,000 sp |
| Engineer (Artillerist)     | 3,000 sp |
| Engineer (Miner or Sapper) | 3,000 sp |
| Jeweller (Gemcutter)       | 2,000 sp |
| Sage                       | Special  |
| Scribe                     | 300 sp   |
| Spy                        | Special  |
| Steward                    | Special  |
| Weaponer                   | 2,000 sp |

| Men at Arms              | Monthly Wage | Equipment Cost | Movement Rate | Armour Class | Damage       | Range Increment |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Artillerist              | 100 sp       | 25 gp          | 90            | 7            | 1d6 or 1d4   | 10              |
| Bowman, Long             | 80 sp        | 79 gp          | 90            | 7            | 1d6          | 70              |
| Bowman, Short            | 40 sp        | 34 gp          | 90            | 7            | 1d6          | 50              |
| Bowman (Mounted)         | 120 sp       | 196 gp         | 240 or 90     | 7            | 1d6          | 50              |
| Captain                  | Special      | as type        | as type       | as type      | as type      | as type         |
| Crossbowman              | 40 sp        | 31 gp          | 90            | 7            | 1d4+1 or 1d6 | 60              |
| Crossbowman (Mounted)    | 80 sp        | 197 gp         | 240 or 90     | 7            | 1d4+1 or 1d6 | 60              |
| Footman, Heavy           | 40 sp        | 62 gp          | 60            | 6            | 1d10 or 1d6  | n/a             |
| Footman, Heavy (Mounted) | 60 sp        | 99 gp          | 240 or 60     | 6            | 1d10 or 1d6  | n/a             |
| Footman, Light           | 20 sp        | 32 gp          | 90            | 6            | 1d6          | 15              |
| Footman, Light (Mounted) | 40 sp        | 69 gp          | 240 or 90     | 6            | 1d6          | 15              |
| Horseman, Heavy          | 120 sp       | 675 gp         | 150 or 90     | 4            | 2d4+1 or 1d8 | n/a             |
| Horseman, Medium         | 80 sp        | 465 gp         | 180 or 60     | 5            | 2d4+1 or 2d4 | n/a             |
| Horseman, Light          | 60 sp        | 294 gp         | 240 or 90     | 6            | 2d4+1 or 1d6 | 10              |
| Lieutenant               | Special      | as type        | as type       | as type      | as type      | as type         |
| Pikeman                  | 60 sp        | 59 gp          | 60            | 6            | 1d6+1 or 1d6 | n/a             |
| Sapper                   | 80 sp        | 25 gp          | 90            | 7            | 1d6 or 1d4   | 10              |
| Sergeant                 | Special      | as type        | as type       | as type      | as type      | as type         |
| Slinger                  | 60 sp        | 28 gp          | 90            | 6            | 1d4+1 or 1d6 | 35              |
| Ship Crew                | Monthly Wage | Equipment Cost | Movement Rate | Armour Class | Damage       | Range Increment |
| Lieutenant               | Special      | as type        | as type       | as type      | as type      | as type         |
| Marine                   | 60 sp        | 70 gp          | 60            | 5            | 1d6          | 15 or 10        |
| Master                   | Special      | as type        | as type       | as type      | as type      | as type         |
| Mate                     | 600 sp       | as type        | as type       | as type      | as type      | as type         |
| Oarsman                  | 100 sp       | 35 gp          | 90            | 6            | 1d6 or 1d4   | 10              |

|        |       |       |     |   |            |    |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|---|------------|----|
| Sailor | 40 sp | 20 gp | 120 | 9 | 1d6 or 1d4 | 10 |
|--------|-------|-------|-----|---|------------|----|

**Alchemist:** Learned in the admixture and creation of the various powders, elixirs, unguents, salves, ointments, oils, essences, and other arcane ingredients. A level seven magic user requires the aid of an alchemist to create magical potions; by level eleven such assistance is no longer needed, but will reduce the cost and time involved by half if available. In general, alchemists must be sought in cities. It is very unlikely that they will take service with a player character unless retained for a year or more, provided with a well stock laboratory and an initial fiscal incentive of up to one hundred gold pieces.

**Armourer:** Required for the production and maintenance of armour and shields; for every sixty men at arms or barded warhorses present, there must be at least one armourer available. Each must be provided with a workroom and forge at an additional cost, but sufficient apprentices and assistants are assumed to be accounted for as part of his monthly wage. Whilst otherwise unoccupied, and given an initial week in which to prepare, an armourer of sufficient skill may produce items in accordance with the table below; the GM should determine the additional cost involved and what level of skill an individual armourer has reached.

| Armour Type    | Days to Produce | Skill Level | Required Hirelings              |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Helmet, Small  | 2 days          | High        | Armourer                        |
| Helmet, Great  | 10 days         | High        | Armourer                        |
| Padded Armour  | 30 days         | Low         | Tailor                          |
| Leather Armour | 10 days         | Low         | Armourer, Leatherer             |
| Ring Armour    | 20 days         | Low         | Armourer, Leatherer, Tailor     |
| Studded Armour | 15 days         | Low         | Armourer, Leatherer, Tailor     |
| Scale Armour   | 30 days         | Low         | Armourer, Leatherer, Tailor     |
| Mail Armour    | 45 days         | Average     | Armourer                        |
| Splint Armour  | 20 days         | Low         | Armourer, Blacksmith, Leatherer |
| Banded Armour  | 30 days         | High        | Armourer                        |
| Plate Armour   | 90 days         | High        | Armourer                        |
| Shield, Large  | 2 days          | High        | Armourer, Carpenter             |
| Shield, Small  | 1 day           | High        | Armourer, Carpenter             |

A dwarf armourer is more likely to have a higher level of skill and is twice as efficient, but also demands three times the standard wage; furthermore, a dwarf is unlikely to serve for more than a year at a time. A gnome armourer is slightly more likely to have a higher level of skill and increases efficiency by half, but requires twice the ordinary wage. The services of an elf armourer can only be obtained for five times the usual wage, but will produce mail of the highest quality and reduce the production time by half.

**Blacksmith:** Essential for the maintenance of a stronghold and any resident soldiery; for every blacksmith retained the needs of up to one hundred and twenty men or horses can be met, but there must be at least one in every stronghold and a workroom and forge must be provided for each. If sufficient time is available, a blacksmith can produce simple weaponry at the following rates and at a cost determined by the game master.

| Weapon Type  | Days to Produce |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Arrow Head   | 1               |
| Quarrel Tip  | 1               |
| Spear        | 2               |
| Morning Star | 2               |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Flail    | 5 |
| Pole Arm | 5 |

A dwarf blacksmith is three times as efficient as a human, but will demand ten times the ordinary pay. A gnome blacksmith is twice as efficient as a human, but will demand four times the usual wage.

**Engineer (Architect):** Necessary for the successful construction of any but the most simple of surface structures. An architect requires payment by the month, even for short projects, and expects to receive an additional sum equal to one tenth of the building costs. Unless the construction site was approved by an architect, there is a three in four chance that any structure will collapse within a month to a few years of completion.

**Engineer (Artillerist):** Mandatory for the construction and correct operation of siege weapons, such as the trebuchet or ballista. Any attempt to build or use such weapons correctly without the aid of such an engineer will surely fail. If retained for only a few months at a time, this specialist demands higher pay, perhaps as much as sixty percent above the standard wage.

**Engineer (Miner and Sapper):** Indispensable for the overseeing of any mining operations, underground construction, or siege and counter siege works that involve trenches, fortifications, assault towers and other similar siege devices. A dwarf engineer of this sort is required if dwarf miners are employed; he will demand twice the standard wage, but increase the productivity of any human miners by one fifth.

**Jeweller and Gemcutter:** Able to speedily and accurately appraise the value of most gems, jewellery and other precious objects, a jeweller is also capable of repairing, enhancing or newly creating ornamented items and jewellery. Simple tasks, such as setting a stone in the hilt of a sword or the forging of a plain ring, might take only a few days to a week, whilst more complex undertakings, such as producing a gem studded bracelet, could take up to a month; of course, truly opulent and intricate items might take a year or more.

Often a jeweller is also skilled at cutting gems; just as in their former capacity they may increase the value of an item through their craft, as a gemcutter they may increase the value of poorly cut stones, usually those worth less than five thousand gold pieces. However, the level of proficiency an individual possesses with regard to each skill varies and must be determined by the game master. A dwarf of this profession often possesses a greater degree of general ability than a human, but commands twice the pay. A gnome may be no better a jeweller than a human, but they are typically of even greater skill than a dwarf when it comes to gemcutting, and can also ask for twice the standard wage.

**Mercenaries:** The numbers, type and frequency of men at arms available in a given settlement are at the discretion of the game master, but a chart is provided below with suggested probability distributions. In general, when a group of six to ten mercenaries of the same type is encountered they will be led by a sergeant; larger groups will be led by a lieutenant or captain, as appropriate, and include sufficient sergeants to keep the regular soldiers in order. There must be an officer, such as a captain, for each body of mercenaries that a player character wishes to retain.

| d%    | Type                    | 1-40 | 41-70 | 71-90 | 91-100 |
|-------|-------------------------|------|-------|-------|--------|
| 01-04 | Bowman, Long            | 1d6  | 2d6   | 3d6   | 4d6    |
| 05-10 | Bowman, Short           | 2d6  | 3d6   | 4d6   | 5d6    |
| 11    | Bowman, Short (Mounted) | 1d3  | 1d6   | 2d6   | 3d6    |
| 12-17 | Crossbowman             | 2d6  | 3d6   | 4d6   | 5d6    |

|       |                          |         |         |         |         |
|-------|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 18-21 | Crossbowman (Mounted)    | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     | 4d6     |
| 22-24 | Slingman                 | 1d3     | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     |
| 25-35 | Footman, Heavy           | 1d6     | 3d6     | 5d6     | 10d6    |
| 36-38 | Footman, Heavy (Mounted) | 1d3     | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     |
| 39-45 | Footman, Light           | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     | 4d6     |
| 46-49 | Footman, Light (Mounted) | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     | 4d6     |
| 50-52 | Pikeman                  | 1d6     | 3d6     | 5d6     | 7d6     |
| 53-57 | Horseman, Heavy          | 1d3     | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     |
| 58-65 | Horseman, Medium         | 1d3     | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     |
| 66-77 | Horseman, Light          | 1d6     | 2d6     | 3d6     | 5d6     |
| 78-79 | Artillerist              | 1       | 2       | 3       | 4       |
| 80-81 | Sapper                   | 1d2     | 2d2     | 3d2     | 4d2     |
| 82    | Captain                  | 1       | 1       | 1       | 1       |
| 83    | Lieutenant               | 1       | 1       | 1       | 1       |
| 84-88 | Sergeant                 | 1       | 1       | 1d2     | 1d3     |
| 89-90 | Any Ranged               | as type | as type | as type | as type |
| 91-96 | Any Foot                 | as type | as type | as type | as type |
| 97-99 | Any Horse                | as type | as type | as type | as type |
| 00    | Any                      | as type | as type | as type | as type |

The majority of regular men at arms are zero level characters with 1d4+3 hit points; if more experienced soldiers are desired, then the game master must decide with what frequency they are available and what payment they require in accordance with the campaign milieu. Similarly, the prospect of raising militias and levies is not addressed here, their quality depending on many factors, but in most cases being inferior to that of professional soldiery.

As with most standard hirelings, very few men at arms will agree to serve for periods of less than a month and sergeants, lieutenants and captains will never agree to serve for such a limited duration. Mercenaries retained on a short term basis will rarely agree to perform dangerous duties unless paid considerably more than the standard sum; indeed, thirty times the daily wage is typically demanded.

- **Artillerist:** Required for the operation of siege weapons and other engines of war; in desperate circumstances, artillerists will fight in the manner of light footmen. Typical equipment includes studded armour, short sword, and dagger.
- **Bowman, Long:** Expert in the use of powerful bows, long bowmen also serve as light footmen when required. Typical equipment includes studded armour, long bow, quiver with twelve arrows, and hand axe.
- **Bowman, Short:** Proficient in the use of bows, short bowmen can also fight as light footmen, but usually will not. Typical equipment includes studded armour, short bow, quiver with twelve arrows, and hand axe.
- **Bowman(Mounted):** Skilled at shooting from the saddle, but generally unwilling to close to melee; mounted bow- men have a reputation for poor discipline. Typical equipment includes a light warhorse with gear, studded armour, short bow, quiver with twelve arrows, and hand axe.
- **Captain:** Equivalent to a fifth to eighth level fighter, but incapable of conventional advancement by level. A captain may lead twenty men at arms and one lieutenant for every level of experience he possesses, as well as the necessary number of sergeants; the monthly wage demanded by a captain is equal to his level multiplied by 100 gold pieces.
- **Crossbowman:** Practiced in the use of crossbows and willing to fight as light footmen when required. A heavy crossbowman will often require a light footman to shield him whilst reloading.

Typical equipment includes studded armour, light crossbow, quiver with twelve light bolts, and hand axe.

- **Crossbowman (Mounted):** Trained to shoot and reload light crossbows from horseback, mounted crossbowmen are also willing to fight hand to hand when necessary. Typical equipment includes a light warhorse with gear, studded leather, light crossbow, quiver with twelve light bolts, and light pick.
- **Footman, Heavy:** Intended primarily for fighting and manoeuvring in close order on open ground, heavy footmen employ the appropriate arms and armour. Typical equipment includes scale armour, halberd, and short sword.
- **Footman, Heavy (Mounted):** Familiar enough with horses to ride them, but not trained to fight from horseback, mounted heavy footmen dismount to fight. Horses need to be looked after during combat, which requires one man for every four mounts. Typical equipment includes a riding horse with gear, scale armour, halberd, and short sword.
- **Footman, Light:** Accustomed to fighting in open order and traversing broken or rough terrain, light footmen are armed and armoured accordingly. Typical equipment includes studded armour, large shield, spear, and handaxe.
- **Footman, Light (Mounted):** Familiar enough with horses to ride them, but not trained to fight from horseback, mounted light footmen dismount to fight. Horses need to be looked after during combat, which requires one man for every four mounts. Typical equipment includes a riding horse with gear, studded armour, large shield, spear, and hand axe.
- **Horseman, Heavy:** Most effective when attacking in very close order on open terrain, heavy horsemen are well armed and fearsome in combat. Typical equipment includes a heavy warhorse with gear, mail barding, mail armour, large shield, lance, long sword, and dagger.
- **Horseman, Medium:** Capable of delivering a powerful charge over open ground and in close order, well used medium horsemen can prove decisive. Typical equipment includes a medium warhorse with gear, scale barding, scale armour, large shield, lance, broadsword, and dagger.
- **Horseman, Light:** Swift in pursuit and quick to retreat, light horsemen fight in open order and make excellent skirmishers. Typical equipment includes a light warhorse with gear, leather barding, studded armour, small shield, lance, and hand axe.
- **Lieutenant:** Equivalent to a second or third level fighter, but incapable of conventional advancement by level. A lieutenant may lead ten men at arms for every level of experience he possesses, as well as the necessary number of sergeants; in addition, he may command a number of unassigned sergeants equal to his level. When serving a captain, only the lieutenant counts against the number of men that may be led. The monthly wage demanded by a lieutenant is equal to his level multiplied by 100 gold pieces.
- **Pikeman:** Trained to fight with long pikes and manoeuvre in close formation on flat terrain, pikemen will also fight as heavy footmen. Mixed formations of more than one hundred pikemen and heavy foot require at least two months of drilling to be effective. Typical equipment includes scale armour, pike, and short sword.
- **Sapper:** Necessary for the use of assault towers, the construction or undermining of fortifications, and other siege works. Sappers fight in the manner of heavy footmen, but are usually lightly armoured and unwilling to engage in combat. Typical equipment includes studded armour, short sword, and dagger.
- **Sergeant:** Equivalent to a first level fighter, but incapable of conventional advancement by level. A sergeant can lead up to ten men independently or in service to a lieutenant or captain. In any given company, there must be one sergeant for every five to ten men at arms. The monthly wage required by a sergeant is ten times that of the troop type he leads.
- **Slinger:** Adept in the use of the sling to disrupt and harass the enemy, slingers are also able fight as light footmen, though they are generally restricted to light armour and weapons. Typical equipment includes studded armour, small shield, sling, pouch with twelve bullets, and hand axe.

**Optional Rule:** At the discretion of the game master, a player character fighter of the appropriate level may serve as a sergeant, lieutenant or captain, as might an allied non-player character fighter or henchmen. A character of a related class, such as ranger or paladin, might also suffice if the circumstances warrant such an allowance.

**Non-Human Mercenaries:** The opportunity to retain the services of non-human mercenaries is something that depends on an individual campaign milieu; however, it is typically more difficult than enlisting standard men at arms. Individuals of mixed ancestry, such as half elves or half orcs may be found amongst the ranks of either parentage.

In general, demi-humans will only agree to take service with a champion of their race or in a cause that is directly in their interest, with the aid of elves being the most difficult to obtain. As an exception, dwarf mercenaries might, for double normal pay, be successfully recruited to fight in the causes of others.

Many humanoids, such as kobolds, goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, bugbears or gnolls, may take service with evil aligned characters that are powerful enough to master them or insidious enough to manipulate them. They may even serve for less than half pay, but such soldiery are given to breaches of discipline, vile behaviour, despoliation of any territory they pass through and the intolerable abuse or murder of any unfortunate inhabitants.

**Sage:** The ultimate receptacle of knowledge and lore, a sage is a sort of mediæval research library contained in one being. The sage can be summed up as a person with a degree of knowledge on just about everything, a lot of knowledge in a few specific fields, and authoritative knowledge in his or her special fields of study.

In game terms, the sage would be able to converse intelligently on a wide variety of subjects but would give very good advice in his or her field of study, authoritative advice in his or her special areas of research, and reasonable advice in one or two other fields. Keep in mind, too, that all this is relative—advice from a sage should never be lightly ignored, no matter the subject under discussion or area of study of the sage. Obviously, portraying such an individual presents a challenge: how much does the sage know and in what areas does he or she know it? The tables presented here should help the GM to fully answer those questions.

First, the fields of specialty must be determined. As always, random generation scores are included but the GM should feel free to tailor a sage to campaign's needs. Be careful of meta-game questions or information. This is to say, the players should not be able to ask things about which the characters should have no knowledge, nor should the sage divulge information which she should not possess. If laser guns do not exist in your milieu, for instance, then no question concerning them should be answered.

### Sage Ability Table

| D%    | Minor Fields | Special Categories in Major Field |
|-------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| 01-10 | 1            | 2                                 |
| 11-30 | 1            | 3                                 |
| 31-50 | 1            | 4                                 |
| 51-70 | 2            | 2                                 |
| 71-90 | 2            | 3                                 |
| 91-00 | 2            | 4                                 |

### Sage Fields of Study (d%)

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>Humankind (01-30)</b>                  |                  |
| Art                                       | Law              |
| Biology                                   | Politics         |
| Demography                                | Psychology       |
| History                                   | Religion         |
| Languages                                 | Sociology        |
| <b>Demi-humankind (31-40)</b>             |                  |
| Art                                       | Law              |
| Biology                                   | Politics         |
| Demography                                | Psychology       |
| History                                   | Religion         |
| Languages                                 | Sociology        |
| <b>Humanoids (41-50)</b>                  |                  |
| Art                                       | Law              |
| Biology                                   | Politics         |
| Demography                                | Psychology       |
| History                                   | Religion         |
| Languages                                 | Sociology        |
| <b>Natural Philosophy (51-65)</b>         |                  |
| Alchemy                                   | Mathematics      |
| Architecture                              | Meteorology      |
| Astronomy                                 | Metallurgy       |
| Chemistry                                 | Oceanography     |
| Geography                                 | Physics          |
| Geology                                   | Topography       |
| <b>Fauna (66-75)</b>                      |                  |
| Amphibians                                | Insects          |
| Arachnids                                 | Mammals          |
| Avians                                    | Marsupials       |
| Crustaceans & Molluscs                    | Reptiles         |
| Fish                                      |                  |
| <b>Flora (76-85)</b>                      |                  |
| Bushes & Shrubs                           | Herbs            |
| Flowers                                   | Mosses & Ferns   |
| Trees                                     | Grasses & Grains |
| Weeds                                     | Fungi            |
| <b>Supernatural &amp; Unusual (86-00)</b> |                  |
| Astrology & Numerology                    | Magic            |
| Cryptography                              | Medicine         |
| Divination                                | Metaphysics      |
| Heraldry, Signs, & Sigils                 | Planes           |

**Chance of Knowing the Answer to a Question:** Roll the generated number or less to determine if the sage knows the answer to the query.

| Question is:  | General | Specific | Exacting |
|---------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Out of Fields | 35%     | 10%      | 1%       |

|                     |     |     |     |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| In Minor Field      | 50% | 35% | 15% |
| In Major Field      | 70% | 60% | 35% |
| In Special Category | 90% | 75% | 50% |

Examples of the different types of questions:

**General:** Do humanoids inhabit the region north of the Great Mountains?

**Specific:** Do hobgoblins of the Three Skulls tribe live in the region north of the Great Mountains?

**Exacting:** Do the hobgoblins of the Three Skulls tribe living in the region north of the Great Mountain possess the dread artifact known as "The Great Spear of Kaliban"?

A sage does not carry all his or her knowledge within his or her head. Picture the modern attorney and the considerable size of the libraries in his offices. This may give one an idea of the sheer volume of stored information a sage will wish to be able to access on demand. Sages are scholarly, eccentric types and a PC offering to hire one will be expected to provide private living spaces far away from noise and the bustle of activity. The minimum quarters a sage would accept would consist of four separate rooms of no less than 200 square-ft each: living quarters, study, library, and workroom. Depending upon the field of speciality, the sage may also request various other areas, such as a zoo for housing living creatures for study, or a greenhouse for the study of plants. The average sage will see the player as the opportunity for acquisition of additional materials for study and categorisation and will, in all likelihood, demand far more for his or her work than he or she will actually need. At any rate, the busier the sage is kept and the more often his or her studies are interrupted, the more materials and money he or she will likely demand.

**Sage Characteristics:** If a sage is to be hired for a long period of time, his or her abilities and alignment should be determined as follows.

**Strength:** 1d8+6 **Intelligence:** 1d4+14 **Dexterity:** 3d6 **Wisdom:** 1d6+12 **Constitution:** 2d6+3  
**Charisma:** 2d6+3 **Alignment:** see table below **Hit Points:** 4d6

| d%    | Result          | d%    | Result         |
|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------|
| 01-05 | Chaotic Evil    | 41-60 | Lawful Neutral |
| 06-10 | Chaotic Good    | 61-80 | Neutral        |
| 11-20 | Chaotic Neutral | 81-90 | Neutral Evil   |
| 21-30 | Lawful Evil     | 91-00 | Neutral Good   |
| 31-40 | Lawful Good     |       |                |

**Special Skills:** Sages have limited ability in spell-casting granted to them by the sheer volume of knowledge they have accumulated and the type of spell is usually related to their field of speciality. The GM should determine whether the sage's spell-casting ability is arcane, phantasmal, divine or druidic when the sage is created, based on a judgement call rather than a random roll. Expertise in the field of magic, for instance, would indicate arcane spell ability. On the other hand a sage with extensive knowledge of trees would have druidic spell ability. Phantasmal magic might be associated with psychology and divine ability with astronomy.

Roll 1d4+2 to determine the maximum level of the spells the sage knows and 1d4 to generate the maximum number of spells known for each level. Spells memorised by the sage will normally be of utility to a non-adventuring type person, for example: unseen servant, read magic, locate object, or tongues. The sage will cast the spell at the minimum level required for a member of that class to cast

the spell. Tongues, to take an instance from the above list, would be cast by the sage as a 5th level magic user. A sage will regard his or her spell knowledge as a closely kept secret and will not divulge this ability lightly.

**Hiring A Sage:** Only fighters, rangers, paladins, thieves, and assassins may hire a sage; though other classes may consult with sages as need dictates. Hiring a sage will require the PC have a stronghold outfitted with space for the sage as indicated above. Sages will only accept a permanent offer of lifetime service.

**Location of a Sage:** Sages are located in larger towns and in cities, particularly near universities, museums, libraries, and the like. Sages also have a somewhat informal brotherhood but there is nothing such as a guild house where one might inquire about hiring a sage. Any sage will have a general knowledge as to the whereabouts of most sages in the area. Likewise, the employment of any sage will quickly become common knowledge throughout the general area.

**Short Term Employment—Consulting a Sage:** Players do not need to hire a sage before asking questions of one. Consultations last no more than 1 week, after which the sage will not be available to the players for the period of 1 month. Consultation fees run to 100 gp per day plus the amount shown on the tables in Information Discovery section below.

**Long Term Employment:** As with most types of hirelings, sages agreeing to employment will show up with only the clothes on their backs and the shoes on their feet. Unlike other hirelings, however, the initial outlay of money and materials involved with employing a sage is considerable.

**Support and salary, per month:** 200 gp to 1,200 gp (2d6×100) **Research grants, per month:** 200 gp to 1,200 gp (2d6×100) **Initial material expenditure:** 20,000 gp minimum

This minimum initial material expenditure will allow the sage to operate at about 50% efficiency in performing research and providing information. Each extra 1,000 gp will increase efficiency by 1% until 90% is reached (60,000 gp).

Thereafter, each 1% increase will cost the employer a further 4,000 gp. This is to simulate the increasingly difficult acquisition of rare books and equipment. The proper setting and materials for the sage to operate at 100% efficiency cost a total of 100,000 gp.

The employer can spend still more money to increase the sage ability in both general and specific fields of study. For 5,000 gp and 1 month of uninterrupted study, the sage can increase ability outside of his or her field 1%, up to a maximum gain of 5%. For 10,000 gp and 1 month uninterrupted study time the sage can increase expertise in his or her minor fields of study by 1% up to a maximum gain of 5%. A minor field can be added, up to three maximum, for 100,000 gp and 2 years of study. A major field of study requires 200,000 gp and also requires an uninterrupted 2 years of study time.

Payment for such additional studies must be made in advance and if the sage is asked a question during that time the money is lost and effort wasted.

## Information Discovery

Use the table below for determining fees and time required for information discovery. This table assumes research under the optimal condition of the sage having a stocked workshop with library and being located near a large town or city.

Location is important because the sage may need additional equipment or materials for additional research which simply would not be available in more rural settings. A sage located far from large

population centres will probably require double the regular fee schedule and allotted time for research. In such a situation, after rolling on the Chance of Knowing the Answer to a Question table, roll d% again. For all categories except Special, if the second roll is 20% or less of the first percentage generated the sage knows the answer without having to conduct the research at the more expensive double rate, since the information he or she already has at hand is sufficient to answer the query.

**For example;** a sage in a remote location is asked specific question in an Out of Fields category. The GM rolls a 10 on a 1d10 and the table yields a result of 20%. The GM rolls d% again and if the result is 1 (20% of 20) the sage will be able to provide an answer at the regular cost; otherwise research time and cost will be doubled. For questions in the sage's special category of knowledge the spread increases to 80%. Fees for secondary questions based upon answers to a previous question are subject to the sage's reaction to the players; the GM must decide whether the fee is charged again, or partial, or waived. Unknown information will take from 50%-100% of allotted time to determine whether sage can answer the question, but will cost only half the standard rate.

The abbreviation “r” means “rounds”, “h” means “hours”, and “d” means “days”.

### Information Discovery Time and Cost Table

| Question is:        | General | Specific | Exacting | Cost (gp) |
|---------------------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Out of Fields       | 1d6r    | 2d6d     | —        | 100/d     |
| In Minor Field      | 1d4r    | 2d10d    | 5d8d     | 1,000/d   |
| In Major Field      | 1d3r    | 1d12d    | 3d10d    | 500/d     |
| In Special Category | 1d2r    | 1d10h    | 2d6d     | 200/d     |

**Rest and Recuperation:** For every day spent in research the sage must spend 3 days resting. Interruptions during this down-time will result in additional days of rest and maximum costs and research times for any questions he or she is compelled to answer.

**Demi-Human or Half-Human Sages:** Most sages are human but sometimes sages of other races will be encountered. Chances are they will not be interested in consulting with player characters—especially human PCs. As always, this rule depends upon their reaction to the players and the circumstances of the encounter.

**Scribe:** Practiced in the art of writing, a typical scribe is expected to keep records, write letters and copy documents. Others may possess additional skills, such as cartography, counterfeiting, cryptography, illuminating or the ability to write, read or otherwise comprehend more than one language. Such accomplished individuals might command ten times the standard wage.

**Ship Company:** The availability of crews and ships in a given port willing to take service with a player character is at the discretion of the game master. A vessel must normally be suited to the waters into which it will venture and the crew recruited appropriate to the ship, as well as familiar with its handling; a mixed crew, for instance, is required for vessels that employ both sail and oar. A vessel and crew intended for river travel will be unsuitable for coastal voyages, just as a ship built for coastal trading will be of little use on the open sea. If any of these criteria are left unmet, there will be a significant chance of mishap.

Every ship, no matter the size, requires a master, at least one lieutenant and a mate. In all respects other than those outlined below, these officers correspond to the mercenary captain, lieutenant and sergeant, respectively. The master of the ship will expect to receive one half share of any treasure taken for every full share a player character receives; each lieutenant will similarly expect to receive one tenth share and each mate one fiftieth, whilst at least a further tenth share is to be distributed

between the crewmen.

- **Lieutenant:** Equivalent to a second or third level fighter, but incapable of conventional advancement by level. At least one lieutenant is required for every twenty crewmen or part thereof that makes up a ship's company, but not including mates. The monthly wage demanded by a lieutenant is equal to his level multiplied by 100 gold pieces.
- **Marine:** Trained primarily to repel and engage in boarding actions, marines otherwise fight in close order as heavy footmen. Typical equipment includes scale armour, large shield, spear, short sword, and hand axe.
- **Master:** Equivalent to a fifth to eighth level fighter, but incapable of conventional advancement by level. A ship must have a master of the appropriate type if it is to operate without fear of preventable disaster. The monthly wage required by a captain is equal to his level multiplied by 100 gold pieces.
- **Mate:** Equivalent to a first level fighter, but incapable of conventional advancement by level. At least one mate is required for every ten crewmen or part thereof that makes up a ship's company.
- **Oarsman:** Accustomed to protracted periods of steady rowing, oarsmen are well paid and willing to fight as heavy footmen. Typical equipment includes studded armour, small shield, short sword, and dagger.
- **Sailor:** Necessary for the operation of most sailing vessels, sailors will fight as light footmen, but are unwilling to wear body armour. Typical equipment includes small shield, short sword, and dagger.

**Spy:** Recruited to secretly watch the actions of others and gather information, a spy could be anyone from an under-paid and unhappy chamber maid to a professional thief or assassin. A player character wishing to engage the services of a prospective informer must do his own convincing. Fees may vary wildly, from perhaps a mere hundred gold pieces to many thousands, depending on the individual and the difficulty of what is asked. The base probability of successfully completing a task ranges from ten to fifty percent, in accordance with its complexity, and modified as appropriate by taking into account the class and level of the spy. A character who is often involved in subterfuge may be treated as though a spy of a level equivalent to the number of successful assignments he has carried out, within reasonable limits. Of course, there is always a small chance that a spy will be discovered, especially during a lengthy and complex assignment, and failure may result in disappearance, death or betrayal.

**Steward:** Responsible for the administration of a stronghold in the absence or inability of a player character, a steward holds a position of great prestige and trust. Usually, such an individual is promoted from the position of mercenary captain and will not afterwards take kindly to being asked to reassume that role, even temporarily. Whilst serving within the stronghold, a steward is capable of leading forty men at arms and two lieutenants for every level of experience he possesses, as well as the necessary number of sergeants. Given that a fortress is well provisioned, garrisoned and supported at the time at which he is appointed, a steward will see to it that such remains the case. Of course, if a player character expects his dependents to vigorously resist any enemy action in his absence or incapacity, he must ensure that the loyalty of such men is strongly maintained. The monthly wage due to a steward is equal to his level multiplied by one hundred gold pieces.

**Optional Rule:** At the discretion of the game master, a henchman of the appropriate class and level might be appointed as steward, rather than a mercenary captain.

**Weaponer:** Required for the production of complex weaponry and the maintenance of the arms of any soldiery; there must be at least one weaponer available for every sixty men at arms retained. Each must be provided with a workroom and forge at an additional cost, but sufficient apprentices and assistants are assumed in his monthly wage. Whilst otherwise unoccupied and given an initial

month in which to prepare, or a year in the case of long and composite bows, a weaponer may produce various arms at the below rates and at a cost determined by the game master. A leatherer is necessary for the creation of scabbards and sheaths.

| Weapon Type       | Days to Produce |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Bow, Long         | 6-15            |
| Bow, Composite    | 6-15            |
| Crossbow, Heavy   | 2               |
| Scimitar          | 3               |
| Sword, Bastard    | 3¾              |
| Sword, Broad      | 2               |
| Sword, Long       | 2½              |
| Sword, Short      | 1½              |
| Sword, Two Handed | 6               |
| Other             | 1               |

At the discretion of the game master, specialist weaponers may be required for the making of some weapons. For instance, a blade smith for the forging of swords and daggers or a bowyer and fletcher for the whittling of bows, construction of crossbows and manufacturing of arrows. In any case, procuring the full time services of a weaponer should always be somewhat difficult.

A good deal more could be said on the subject of hirelings. Many possible common professions are not represented here, rates of pay that take into account the relative skill of individual craftsmen are not provided, supply and demand is not accounted for, nor is the difficulty and prospective cost of persuading standard hirelings to undertake work in hazardous conditions discussed. This is partly because such things are too variable to systemise adequately, but it also allows for individual game masters to develop the level of complexity that they are comfortable with.

## Henchmen

Henchmen are classed and leveled non-player character adventurers in the service of higher level player characters. A third level magic user, for instance, might take on a first level fighter henchman to act as his personal guard. However, the henchmen of a player character are more significant than mere hirelings; they become his companions, friends, and supporters, acting in his interests even in his absence. Indeed, a very loyal henchman may sacrifice his very life in defence of a player character or charge unbidden into the thick of the fray to rescue him. Consequently, henchmen are highly sought after by experienced players, and the number a character may have is limited by his charisma score.

**Demographics:** The number of henchmen available in a particular locale depends on the total population, and its predisposition towards attracting adventurer types. A prosperous trading city with 30,000 inhabitants might have 300 characters capable of level advancement, but only 1 in 10 of them are likely to be available and interested in serving as henchmen. The incidence of adventurers may be higher or lower, depending on the settlement, its circumstances, and the assumptions of the campaign milieu, perhaps varying by as much as a factor of five or more in either direction.

**Recruiting:** There are four basic ways in which a player character may attempt to locate a henchman, and each may be attempted only once a month, either individually or in combination. Hiring a public crier costs 10 gp, and will attract 1d10% of those available, whilst posting notices in

prominent places costs 50 gp to draw 10d4% of the same. Using agents is costly at 300 gp, but will bring 5d10% of potential henchmen, and a minimum of 10%. A character willing to frequent the various inns and taverns available will induce 1d4% for every 10 gp spent ingratiating themselves with patrons and staff, to a maximum of 5d4%, but every such establishment visited, up to a maximum of ten, reduces the effectiveness of the others by 1%. Furthermore, each method used in combination beyond the first reduces the sum by 5%.

**Response:** The modified total resulting from recruitment efforts is the percentage of all available potential henchmen that respond. Following the first efforts at recruitment, applicants will appear over the course of 2d4 days. If the player character is not present at the agreed place when an individual seeks them out, then that recruiting opportunity is lost. Casting spells upon a prospective henchmen will result in an unfavourable response, though if they consent an exception might be made for know alignment or detect good/evil. Direct questions about alignment and other breaches of etiquette will also be poorly received.

**Characteristics:** Only relate to the interviewing player character what can be detected by normal observational means. Do not blurt out the character's alignment, constitution score, or level. Instead, allow a general idea of these attributes only as a reward to careful questioning on the part of the interviewer.

**Race:** The race of each respondent depends on the locality, and should be in proportion to the established racial demographic. That is to say, if the above prosperous trading city has a human population of 24,000, then 80% of candidates should be of that race. If you wish to reflect a higher incidence of adventurers in the Demi-human population, then consider doubling the number who respond.

**Class:** Use the table below to randomly determine class of applicants. Once characteristics are known, and given that the prospective character qualifies, there is a 1 in 10 chance that a fighter will actually be a ranger, and the same that he will be a paladin. There is similarly a 1 in 6 chance that a magic user will be an illusionist, that a cleric will be a druid, or that a thief will be an assassin, given that the candidate meets the requirements for such a class. Demi-humans may have two or three classes, if they have two scores greater than 13 in the relevant characteristics, and always assuming that they otherwise qualify.

| D%    | Class      |
|-------|------------|
| 01-40 | Fighter    |
| 41-60 | Magic User |
| 61-80 | Cleric     |
| 91-00 | Thief      |

**Level:** Newly recruited henchmen are generally first level characters. The exceptions to this are if the player character himself is higher than sixth level or higher than twelfth level. In the former case, his reputation is such that 1 in 10 henchmen are second level; whilst in the latter case he has achieved such renown that 1 in 4 are second level, and another 1 in 4 are third level.

**Cost:** Once a potential henchmen is selected, there are still costs to be paid and negotiations to be completed. The minimum offer a henchmen will consider is 100 gp per level; this yields a 30% chance of the offer being accepted, which increases by 1% for each additional 10 gp offered above the minimum, up to a maximum of 60%.

**Equipment:** Prospective henchmen arrive with nothing but the clothes they are wearing and perhaps a few coppers in their pockets. This apparent lack of success as an independent adventurer is the

main reason he is seeking the position of henchman, and the offer must therefore include complete equipment in accordance with his class(es). Any magic items useful to the character will typically increase the chance of acceptance by 15%, magical ammunition counting only in groups of six.

**Room and Board:** The potential henchman always expects this. Not including an offer of free room and board decreases the chance of acceptance by 25%.

**Treasure:** The player character must explain to the prospective henchman his specific duties and what is more generally expected. The henchman will want to know what percentage of treasure will be apportioned, and what to expect with regards to magic items. In addition to living expenses, henchmen typically receive a half-share of the treasure gained on a given expedition; they will also expect healing and other restorative spells as needs dictate.

**The Offer:** If the player character tenders an offer the game master must tally up all the percentage modifiers listed above and add any charisma adjustment indicated. This is the offer acceptance chance; if the number rolled does not exceed this chance, then the non-player character accepts service as a henchmen.

**Exceptional Henchmen:** In certain circumstances, a player character may have a relatively high level non-player character in his power, which may then lead to an offer of henchman status. In general, if such a character is more than two levels higher than the player character he will accept only associate status for one or two adventures. No inducement will cause him to willingly accept a longer period of service. However, if the player character is more than two levels higher than the non-player character then an offer may be made normally in accordance with the above guidelines. In any other circumstances, the non-player character will agree to accept associate status for only 1d4 weeks or adventures. If an offer is accepted under threat, then the character will likely be of questionable loyalty.

**Associates:** Typically, an associate non-player character regards himself as being the equal of any player characters, or perhaps their better; he may have been coerced, hired, or joined the party of his own free will and for his own ends. Regardless such characters expect to be treated as a true member of the group, taking their fair share of the risks, and receiving a full share of any treasure or magic items gained. Associates rarely function in this capacity for any great length of time, usually one or two adventures.

**Level:** Newly recruited henchmen are generally first level characters. The exceptions to this are if the player character himself is higher than sixth level or higher than twelfth level. In the former case, his reputation is such that 1 in 10 henchmen are second level; whilst in the latter case he has achieved such renown that 1 in 4 are second level, and another 1 in 4 are third level.

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**The Offer:** If the player character tenders an offer the game master must tally up all the percentage modifiers listed above and add any charisma adjustment indicated. This is the offer acceptance chance; if the number rolled or perhaps their better; he may have been coerced, hired, or joined the party of his own free will and for his own ends. Regardless such characters expect to be treated as a true member of the group, taking their fair share of the risks, and receiving a full share of any treasure or magic items gained. Associates rarely function in this capacity for any great length of time, usually one or two adventures.

## Loyalty of Hirelings and Henchmen

Sooner or later the loyalty of a non-player character will be put to the test. Initial loyalty is 50%, and is adjusted according to the charisma modifier of the player character in whose service they are. The following are guidelines for adjusting hireling and henchmen loyalty to correspond with prevailing circumstances, but they may also be applied more widely to help determine the reaction of other non-player characters and monsters. An experienced game master is not expected to have to refer to these tables, as his own judgement will generally suffice.

### Alignment of Player Character

| Alignment | Modifier |
|-----------|----------|
| Chaotic   | -10%     |
| Evil      | -5%      |
| Neutral   | +0%      |
| Good      | +5%      |
| Lawful    | +10%     |

### Alignment of Hireling or Henchmen

| Alignment      | Player Character | Allies | Example                         |
|----------------|------------------|--------|---------------------------------|
| Similar        | +0%              | +0%    | Lawful Neutral to Neutral       |
| Different      | -10%             | -5%    | Chaotic Neutral to Neutral Good |
| Opposed        | -20%             | -10%   | Neutral Good to Chaotic Evil    |
| Irreconcilable | -30%             | -15%   | Lawful Good to Chaotic Evil     |

### Racial Preferences of Hireling or Henchman

| Relationship | Player Character | Allies |
|--------------|------------------|--------|
| Hated        | -20%             | -10%   |
| Antipathy    | -10%             | -5%    |
| Tolerated    | 0%               | 0%     |
| Friendly     | +10%             | +5%    |

|           |      |      |
|-----------|------|------|
| Preferred | +20% | +10% |
|-----------|------|------|

## Status of Hireling or Henchmen

| Type      | Modifier |
|-----------|----------|
| Slave     | -30%     |
| Conscript | -20%     |
| Hireling  | -10%     |
| Follower  | +0%      |
| Henchman  | +10%     |

## Length of Service

| Length    | Modifier |
|-----------|----------|
| 0-1 month | -5%      |
| 0-1 years | +0%      |
| 1-2 years | +5%      |
| 2-3 years | +10%     |
| 3-4 years | +15%     |
| 4-5 years | +20%     |
| 5+ years  | +25%     |

## Training of Hireling or Henchmen

| Type                  | Modifier |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Untrained             | -30%     |
| Semi-trained          | -20%     |
| Trained, but untested | -10%     |
| Trained               | +0%      |
| Veteran               | +10%     |
| Elite                 | +20%     |
| Leader                | +30%     |

## Payment of Hirelings or Henchmen

| Status    | Modifier |
|-----------|----------|
| Unpaid    | -20%     |
| Late      | -15%     |
| Very Poor | -10%     |
| Poor      | -5%      |
| Standard  | +0%      |
| Good      | +5%      |
| Very Good | +10%     |

## Treatment\*

| Type    | Modifier |
|---------|----------|
| Vicious | -20%     |
| Cruel   | -10%     |

|            |      |
|------------|------|
| Normal     | +0%  |
| Kind       | +10% |
| Beneficent | +20% |

### Discipline\*

| Type        | Modifier |
|-------------|----------|
| Brutal      | -10%     |
| Indifferent | +0%      |
| Fair        | +10%     |

\*As long as the hireling or henchmen fears the player character and believes its actions will likely be observed or reported to some consequence, treat negative modifiers as positive.

**Other Considerations:** Many other situations and circumstances are not accounted for or systemised above, and the game master should feel free to do so himself. Being outnumbered or outclassed by enemies in a combat situation is a good example, as is the death, capture or incapacitation of leaders. Acts of dishonour or evil may lower morale, just as acts of heroism and charity might raise it, depending on the alignment and disposition of the characters or monsters in question. Such factors could potentially swing immediate morale up to fifty percent or more in either direction.

**Loyalty Test:** A loyalty test may be called for in a variety of situations; most commonly it is taken when significant casualties are suffered during a combat encounter, but other moments of stress for a test to determine how a non-player character reacts. Typical examples include being persuaded to give up a magic item, having the opportunity to steal without being discovered, or offered an inducement to act against the interests of the player character. In such circumstances, a 1d100 is rolled and if the result is higher than the adjusted loyalty score of the character, then he gives into temptation.

| Adjusted Loyalty Score | Loyalty   |
|------------------------|---|
| < 01                   | <i>None:</i> Could desert or worse at any time.                           |
| 01-25                  | <i>Disloyal:</i> Will seek personal gain at all times.                    |
| 26-50                  | <i>Somewhat Loyal:</i> Will serve, but exploit any advantage to the full. |
| 51-75                  | <i>Fairly Loyal:</i> Will perform routine tasks most of the time.         |
| 76-100                 | <i>Loyal:</i> Will attempt to serve, even in difficult situations.        |
| > 100                  | <i>Fanatical:</i> Will serve unquestioningly and fight to the death       |

**General Note:** The acquisition of henchmen and hirelings is key to long term success for player characters in the ongoing campaign. They provide a support structure that can help to minimise the worst misfortunes of defeat and reinforce the achievements of victory. Henchmen may even become prominent themselves, perhaps even becoming independent upon the death or retirement of the player character. However, non-player characters should not be treated lightly nor taken for granted; they should react in believable ways and pursue their own ambitions and interests when such seems reasonable. It is the responsibility of the game master to ensure that they are portrayed in a manner that keeps the game challenging for the players.

# Adventure and Exploration

OSRIC is a game of adventure, and the primary activity in adventures is exploration. Even though the rules for combat take up more space in this rulebook, play tends to focus more on exploration than combat. Whether the party is investigating an old ruined shrine, delving into an abandoned dwarfish mine, traversing an unknown wilderness, sailing uncharted waters, or venturing beyond the physical world into the planes of existence, exploration is central to adventure and thus to the game.

While exploration tends to be resolved in a looser, more free-form manner than combat, where description and negotiation are central and pre-defined rules take a background role, there are nonetheless some standard procedures that will help the GM resolve these activities efficiently.

If you are new to OSRIC-compatible rule sets, please reread the section on “Time Measurement” at the beginning of Chapter 3 and ensure that you understand it fully before reading further. When exploring dungeons time is measured in turns. In the wilderness or at sea time is typically measured in days. The planes are a special case and can conform to either, or neither, of the above.

## Searching the Dungeon

Many OSRIC adventures will involve the characters exploring some enclosed area, be it the dungeons beneath a castle or temple, a system of natural caves and caverns, an abandoned mine, the sewers beneath a city, an enemy fortress, a wizard's tower, or a shrine to some dark god. For convenience, and by tradition, these enclosed locations are collectively called “dungeons”, which thus refers not just to a set of man-made tunnels but to any indoor adventure location. Indoor/dungeon adventures tend to have similar characteristics and thus the same set of procedures and suggested resolution mechanics applies to most “dungeon” adventures.

**Order of Play:** While exploring in a dungeon, each turn is resolved separately. Experienced GMs sometimes will allow the turns to run together, but this is only recommended after the GM is comfortable with the basic procedures. The order of events in a game turn is as follows:

- **Wandering Monster Check:** Every third turn the GM rolls to see if any wandering monsters are encountered (typically 1 in 6—consult specific level key for non-standard frequency of check or likelihood of encounter)
- **Statement of Action:** Party caller or individual player describes the activity of the various party members, which are resolved as appropriate by the GM:
  - **Move:** Up to full move rate per turn for cautious movement (including mapping); 5x normal rate when passing through familiar areas (no mapping allowed)
  - **Listen for noise:** 1 round per attempt, 10% standard chance for success (adjusted for class (thieves, assassins) and race (elves, gnomes, halflings, half-orcs), only 3 attempts allowed per situation (e.g. door)
  - **Open a stuck or locked door:** 1 round per attempt, 2 in 6 standard chance for success (adjusted for strength) for stuck door, locked door requires key, *knock* spell, exceptional strength, lock picking, or breaking down door, unlimited retries allowed but no surprise possible after failed attempt
  - **Search for traps:** 1-4 rounds per attempt (covering one object or location), chance of success determined by race (dwarf or gnome), class (thief or assassin) or free-form verbal negotiation (at GM's discretion)
  - **Casually examine (and map) a room or area:** 1 turn per 20-ft×20-ft room or area

- **Thoroughly examine and search for secret doors:** 1 turn per 10×10-ft area, 1 in 6 standard chance for success (2 in 6 for elves and half-elves)
- **Cast a spell:** See specific spell descriptions in Chapter 2 for casting times and effects.
- **Rest:** Typically 1 turn in every 6, plus 1 turn after every combat, must be spent resting (i.e. no movement or any other strenuous activity)
- **Other activities:** Duration of attempt and likelihood of success determined and resolved on adhoc basis by GM
- **Encounters:** If an encounter (either with a wandering monster or a planned encounter) occurs, the GM determines surprise, distance, reactions, and resolves the encounter normally (through negotiation, evasion, or combat)
- **Book-keeping:** The GM records that a turn has elapsed and deducts any resources that the party has used (lost hit points, spell durations expiring, torches burning out, and so on).

Since each turn represents ten minutes of time, characters may combine several actions in the same turn if each is reasonably brief. Thus a character might draw a sword, move up to a door and attempt to open it all in the same turn, for example. Longer actions may take several turns to resolve (such as making a minute search of a 500 square-ft wall) and sensible parties will take steps to guard a character engaged in such activity from unexpected attack.

The guiding principle behind the exploration rules is to maximise the number of meaningful decisions the players take about their actions, and minimise the number of dice rolls between each decision.

**Wandering Monsters:** Typically, wandering monsters are checked for every third turn and encountered 1 chance in 6. If a wandering monster does appear, determine the creature involved randomly unless some factor makes it obvious what the party has met.

Some dungeon levels have special provisions for wandering monsters affecting the frequency of checks, the chance of an encounter, or both. For example, in the first level of the *Pod Caverns of the Sinister Shroom*, the chance of meeting a wandering monster is only 1 in 10.

Wandering monsters in dungeons should be appropriate to the environment both in type of creatures encountered and encounter difficulty. Traditionally dungeons are organised such that the deeper the dungeon level, the more numerous and deadly the creatures encountered—so a group of first level characters exploring the first level of a dungeon should tend to encounter first level monsters, with maybe the occasional second level one, whereas on the sixth dungeon level, characters might expect to meet third or fourth level monsters. This pattern varies from dungeon to dungeon, however. For example, in the *Red Mausoleum*, an adventure designed for characters level 12 and higher, most monsters are extremely powerful even on the very first level!

At the GM's option, wandering monster checks may be made less often or even skipped entirely, but before doing so it is important to think about the reasons behind the rules, and particularly what the wandering monster check should accomplish. The first purpose served by wandering monster checks is to create an impression of complexity in a “living dungeon” environment without GM needing to create activity schedules or account for every creature in the dungeon at every moment. Monsters in the dungeon will have various reasons for leaving their lairs: some may be on patrol, others looking for food, and still others exploring the dungeon just like the player characters; all of the above and more are represented by the wandering monster die.

The other purpose of wandering monsters has nothing to do with verisimilitude and is purely a rules construct, but an important one: wandering monsters discourage players from wasting time. If there is no chance of meeting a wandering monster, there is no incentive for the players to keep the game moving no reason why they shouldn't hold long conversations about their course of action and

methodically check every inch of floor, walls, and ceiling for traps and hidden treasure. Many players, especially those accustomed to computer games that have no in game time limits, will tend towards a “pixel-hunting” approach to play. It is up to the GM, by means of wandering monsters, to discourage this kind of slow play and keep the game moving—otherwise the game will become mired in dull minutiae and nobody will have much fun.

The same principles also apply in reverse, though. The GM should adjust the chance of meeting a wandering monster according to the players' approach. If the party is stealthy, swift, and silent, avoids heavily-trafficked areas and does not stay long in any one place, they should encounter few wandering monsters.

**The Role of the Party Caller (Optional):** If there are many players in the party, some groups like to designate one player as “Caller,” or party spokesman, and filter communication through that single player. This role should not default to a “party leader” who gives the other players orders and reduces them to spectators! Rather, some groups may find that by having a single player speak for the whole group, potential chaos of each player competing for the GM's attention is reduced and the game should run more smoothly, improving the play-experience for all involved. Therefore, if a caller is used, he or she should consult with the other players and then report the party's actions quickly and accurately to the GM.

The caller can be anyone and need not be limited to, for instance, the character with the highest charisma or social standing. In fact, we suggest that if the party uses a caller, the role should rotate among the players from session to session, giving each a turn.

**Movement during dungeon exploration:** Is at the rates listed at the beginning of Chapter 3. This slow, cautious move rate (which works out at a tenth the speed characters move in combat) allows the characters to make a map of their progress, if they wish. When passing through familiar areas or following a map, characters can move at up to five times the normal per-turn move rate (so that a character with a normal move rate of 60-ft could move up to 300-ft per turn if passing through known territory).

Characters fleeing from an encounter may run at ten times their normal per-turn move rate (i.e. at full combat speed). No mapping is possible while fleeing in this manner and a double rest period (see below) is necessary at the end of the pursuit. Since parties will typically want to remain together, movement speed will necessarily be limited to that of the slowest character in the party.

The players should establish, and the party caller inform the GM of, the party's “marching order”, i.e. which characters are in front, the middle, and bringing up the rear. In a standard 10-ft wide dungeon corridor, up to three characters may walk abreast, though if any are wielding large weapons such as flails or two-handed swords, this may be reduced to two characters or even one. Characters in the second rank may only attack with a long weapon, such as a spear or pole arm, or if they are firing missiles over the head of a shorter character such as a gnome or halfling.

There are various ways of keeping track of marching order. If miniature figures are in use, they can be placed on some board to indicate where each character is. If miniatures are not in play, most GMs will ask the party to show their marching order on paper. Sensible parties tend to hand the GM a default marching order upon entering the dungeon, and may have standard positions and procedures for other common circumstances as well. A organised group might say to the GM, “this is our formation when opening a door,” or “in 20 foot wide passages we move like this,” and so forth.

If the party's position is for some reason unclear to the GM, he or she is well within his or her rights to determine who is where by means of a die roll.

**Listening:** May be performed in most places, often at doors before opening them. Unless the entire party is still and quiet (no chattering or clanging around), and unless headgear such as helms are doffed, the listener will not detect any noise save the very loudest.

Thieves and assassins have an enhanced chance to hear noise (see “Thief Skills” in Chapter 1). Characters of all other classes have a base 10% chance. This should be modified by race; elves, gnomes, halflings, and half-orcs have a base 15% chance.

Normally the GM rolls this die in secret, because the player has no way of knowing whether no noise was heard because of the roll or because there was no noise to hear. A character who fails (or thinks he or she has failed) to hear noise may try again, each attempt taking one round. However, no more than three attempts may be made the same character before the strain becomes too great and no further listening attempts will succeed until the character has rested for at least one turn.

If the check is successful, the GM should decide whether there is in fact any noise to be heard. Some monsters, such as bugbears, are stealthy and cannot be detected by listening. However, generally if there is some monster in the area and a “hear noise” check is passed, the party should gain some clue about what it is. Clever players whose characters speak various monster languages may gain valuable information from overhearing snatches of conversation—but the GM should be careful only to describe what characters can actually hear. So the GM would not normally say “you hear a giant spider,” but rather “you hear a scuttling, rattling sound” as the creature climbs to a suitable spot from which to ambush the party.

Don't forget, monsters can hear the party in the same way as the party can hear them!

Listening for noise as often as possible, at every door and intersection, is an understandably common tactic, because it's one of the easiest ways for players to improve the odds in their favour—so as to be able to make better-informed decisions about their actions. This is fine in moderation. However, if the pace of play slows considerably, diminishing the excitement and reducing the adventure to dice-rolling, the GM should discourage the players from endless listening attempts. Emphasise the inconvenience of donning and doffing helmets and headgear while the rest of the party stands around doing nothing; and if play is still slow, employ tricks that circumvent listening, e.g. silent monsters or phantom noises (perhaps due to strange acoustics in the dungeon or magic). In extreme cases the GM can place traps and monsters that specifically target listening characters, but before it gets to that, the GM should speak frankly to the players and explain that while some degree of caution is good play, carrying things to extremes only makes the game less fun.

Balance this against the lethality of the dungeon. In extremely dangerous areas, the players should not be punished for taking due care.

**Opening doors:** Is not normally difficult; the player (or party caller) states the action and the door is opened. However, in some dungeons many doors are stuck and must be forced open. Doors may be locked, braced, jammed, spiked shut or otherwise held fast (by means of a wizard lock spell, for example). Stuck doors may be forced by brute strength (see the strength ability in Chapter 1 for chances of success). Locked doors will need a key, a thief or assassin to pick the lock, or some may be broken down with axes or battering rams. When designing the dungeon, the GM should note which doors are normal, stuck, locked, etc. as well as the locations of any keys.

Attempting to force a stuck door takes one round per attempt and, depending on the size of the door, more than one character may try at once. Thus, two characters could simultaneously try to force a 6-ft wide door—each character makes a check and success by either indicates the door opens. If the first attempt fails, additional tries may be made at no penalty except for time and noise. Attempting

to force a stuck door, and particularly multiple attempts on the same door, is noisy and may increase the odds of meeting a wandering monster. In any event, a failed attempt to open a stuck door will prevent surprise on any creature on the other side of the door.

Lock-picking attempts by thieves and assassins are handled in Chapter 1 and take between 1 round and 1 turn per attempt (depending on the complexity of the lock). 1-4 rounds are typical.

Chopping down a door with axes or by other means is time-consuming and noisy. It takes a full turn at least to chop down a standard-size door, during which time several wandering monster checks should be made. Naturally, the party will have no chance of surprising any creature on the other side.

Furthermore, once a door is opened, it is usually difficult to keep it open, or for that matter to keep it closed. OSRIC has a double-standard that while adventurers may have a hard time opening doors in dungeons, monsters have no such trouble and can open doors automatically unless the players prevent them. The usual way to hold a dungeon-door open or closed is to wedge it with iron spikes. Even then there is a small chance (at the GM's discretion but often around 20-30%) that a spiked door will slip.

**Mapping:** A key element of dungeon exploration; but it is one of the most controversial and misunderstood aspects of the game. If not handled carefully, mapping has huge potential to slow down the game and mire it in frustration.

When designing the dungeon, the GM should map it out on sheets of graph paper, showing the rooms, chambers, corridors, stairways, doors, traps, and other features in relation to one another. As the party moves through the dungeon the GM describes to them what they see and, assuming they have light and proper equipment and are not moving too quickly, the players may choose to draw a map of their own based on the GM's descriptions.

It is important to understand the purpose of the players' map. The goal is not to create an exact copy of the GM's map, but to keep a record of which areas are explored and which not, to allow the party to find their way back to the entrance and, on subsequent expeditions, find their way back to where they left off. If the dungeon is small or simple in layout the players may not need a map. Even if the dungeon is larger or more complex, a "trailing map" with lines for corridors and squares for rooms and chambers, maybe with marginal markings showing length or size, is almost always enough. Only in the most labyrinthine of dungeon levels, with rooms and corridors tightly packed together, are players likely to find making a strictly accurate map rewarding.

On such levels an accurate map can help the players deduce the locations of secret rooms, show them when they're circling back into areas they've already explored by a different route, or even alert them to some trick—a teleporter, shifting room or wall, sloping passage, or the like. Parties keeping a trailing map, or no map at all, may miss hidden treasures or not realise they have gone astray until hopelessly lost, but careful mapping might quickly reveal something is amiss, allowing the party to backtrack and correct their course or search for a solution. These areas are the most difficult to map, but also the most rewarding and fun, since mapping this sort of level can lead to tangible positive results.

Many players hate mapping, considering it a fun-killing burden, and these players will often try to get the GM to design simpler dungeons or even to draw the map for them. The OSRIC GM should avoid these "solutions"; play goes quicker if a player maps. Encourage the players to map appropriately—i.e. only when necessary and use a trailing map where possible.

The GM should make mapping easier by giving effective verbal descriptions: quick, accurate, and

reporting only what the party actually sees. Visualise the dungeon in your mind. Describe things in distances rather than squares.

The players may show you their map and ask if it is correct. Comply only if there is a major error that would be obvious to someone in the dungeon (such as a triangular-shaped room where the party entered via the apex but drew their map as if they'd entered from the base) or if your description was faulty—and in the latter case try to make your descriptions more accurate in future.

In a particularly complicated setup—a room with lots of odd angles, for instance—a quick GM-drawn sketch may be helpful. Do this rarely, and never directly on the players' map.

The players' map represents an actual in-game object. If the players at the table are making a map, then a character must also be making one. This has several corollaries: the party must have light (they can only map what they see) and mapping supplies (something to write with and something to write on), they must be moving slowly and methodically (no more than standard exploration speed), and measuring the size of a room takes time (1 turn per 20-ft×20-ft area is suggested). Perhaps most importantly, if something happens to the map in-game, it happens to the players' map as well! If the mapping character dies and his or her body is left behind, if the characters are captured and stripped of their equipment, or if a jet of acid or a green slime destroys the map, the GM should confiscate it. If the party wants backup copies, the players must actually draw them. If the entire party dies in the dungeon, the only way their maps will survive is if copies were left on the surface.

Clever GMs will see adventure-creating potential here. Maps are a valuable asset for NPCs as well as PCs; map-buying, selling and trading could be rife, and maps found in treasure hoards potentially more valuable than gold.

**Searching for hidden treasure, traps, secret doors, and whatnot:** A common activity. Looking for secret doors is a time-consuming process, taking a full turn for each 10-ft×10-ft area searched. Even so the chance of success is small: 1 in 6 for most characters, with elves and half-elves having an innate advantage (translating to a 2 in 6 chance). Searching for traps is best done by dwarfs, gnomes, thieves, or assassins—chances for success are as described in Chapter 1. A search for traps generally takes 1-4 rounds, but it is also limited to a specific object or small (no more than 5-ft×5-ft) location specified by the player: “I search for traps on the door”, “I search for traps on the treasure chest”, “I search the area directly in front of the throne for traps,” etc.

The GM may allow “negotiation-based” searching for secret doors or traps, in which, through careful questioning and described actions, the players may achieve a bonus, or even an automatic success, on a search. For instance, players may tap along a section of wall listening for the echo of a hollow space. If such a space is discovered, the players may describe their attempts to find and trigger the secret door they know is there—perhaps looking for loose or ill-fitting stones, suspicious indentations or cracks, wall-sconces that may turn or pivot, etc. The same approach can work for traps as well.

The GM must adjudicate these negotiated searches. Perhaps they have no effect and the die roll alone decides success or failure—which certainly helps keep the game moving, but may strip away too much of the players' ability to immerse themselves in the situation. Perhaps a careful description can give a bonus to the standard check, or perhaps the description might trump the die-roll entirely—if the player is able to describe a search in such a manner that the GM feels would definitely find the objective. The downside to this is if the player's description is off-base (searching in the wrong place, via the wrong means, etc.) the GM might actually reduce the chance of success.

These detailed, negotiated searches generally take a long time in-play (more than the standard times listed above) and may increase the odds of encountering a wandering monster. This is, of course,

deliberate; without some incentive to keep things moving players might tend to conduct the most thorough searches possible, describing every inch of every room in minute detail, and dragging the game to a grinding halt.

Disarming traps is normally a job for a thief or assassin (with chances of success as shown in Chapter 1) and takes 1-4 rounds per attempt for a simple trap. A complex trap may take a full turn to disarm. Other characters usually have little to no chance of success, though again careful questioning and attention to detail may create exceptions. For instance, a player may be able to surmise that wedging a pressure plate to prevent it from depressing, or stopping a vent with beeswax to prevent gas from issuing from it, could circumvent a trap.

These sorts of “negotiation-based” solutions to traps are wholly at the GM's discretion. Some GMs encourage and reward this sort of play, but others will discourage it, perhaps feeling this slows down the game too much, or circumvents the intended role of the thief class. It is important that the players and the GM discuss this issue to make sure everyone's expectations align—that the players aren't expecting purely roll—based resolution of traps when the GM is expecting them to play out each attempt, or vice versa.

Traps neither avoided nor disarmed will normally trigger 50% of the time. When designing the dungeon, the GM should define each trap by its nature and effect (see the preceding pages on “Traps”). In areas designed for first level characters, damage should not normally exceed 1d6 or at worst 1d10 and “instant death” effects should be avoided. Lower dungeon levels, on the other hand, are designed for experienced players with high-level characters who should have many ways of dealing with traps, as well as more hit points and better saving throws, so more dangerous and deadly traps may be in order. Even so, the GM should typically allow some kind of saving throw or other way of mitigating the trap's effects.

Some OSRIC groups enjoy even more lethal traps—such as those that cause death with no save. Placing these is a matter for the GM's judgement. Do you wish to encourage the players to raise zombies or call forth unseen servants or summoned monsters and send them ahead? Very lethal traps will probably lead to such behaviour, and in some groups there is a place for this kind of play. Others prefer to avoid it.

Casting spells is detailed in Chapter 2. Many spells, particularly the various detection and divination-type spells, will make the job of exploration easier. It is up to the players to decide the ideal balance between these “utility” spells and those oriented towards combat or healing. There are circumstances in which a timed *knock* or *locate object* spell may prove just as crucially life-saving as yet another *sleep* or *cure light wounds*.

Rest periods are typically necessary one turn out of every six, one turn after each combat, and double-length (two turns) after an evasion or pursuit. Parties that stay in the dungeon for several hours and are not able or willing to return to the surface may spend an entire “night” holed up within the dungeon to recover spells. During these periods the party cannot move, nor may they perform any other strenuous action (though passive activities such as mapping should be allowed). Players should be aware of when these rest periods are coming up, and make sure their surroundings are as inconspicuous, or at least defensible, as possible. A small, out-of-the-way room with a single door that can be spiked shut could be a good location to rest in for a single turn or an entire night; in the middle of an open corridor or near a stairway to a lower level is likely a bad place for even a short rest period, and often a suicidal place to spend several hours.

Occasionally, by accident or design, characters will not take these required rest periods and attempt to press on regardless. If this happens, everyone in the party is fatigued. What this means, and what

sort of impact it has on the characters, is left to the GM's discretion but likely consequences are a reduced movement rate, penalties in combat, temporarily reduced ability scores, and morale reductions for any NPCs who are accompanying the party. The longer the party goes without resting, the worse these effects become.

Other actions are defined in several of the race and class descriptions in Chapter 1. For instance, a dwarf can attempt to determine depth underground, a gnome can try to determine direction, a paladin can detect evil, a ranger can attempt to follow a set of tracks, and so on. Unless otherwise specified, these actions take one round per attempt.

Beyond these sorts of pre-defined activities OSRIC has no specific system for resolving most other tasks. This is intentional—the player characters are heroes, and should be able to do most mundane things without a roll.

Certainly the authors could have included a skill system covering activities such as “horse riding” or “swimming”, but doing so is actively detrimental to heroic gaming. Had we included a “horse riding” skill, characters would start falling off their horses. This strikes us as unnecessary, in the context of heroic adventure gaming, so if you seek a generic skill system for your game, seek it elsewhere. Success at most horse-riding tasks (for example) is automatic.

Where a player character tries something beyond the mundane, the GM should determine the chances of success on an adhoc basis. The GM should look at the circumstances and the character's class, level, race, and ability scores and make an informed judgement about his or her chances of success. This could be a flat judgement—“you succeed” or “you fail”—but is more commonly a die-roll of some kind. The GM should usually tell the player what the chance is, ask the player if they still wish to proceed, and if so allow the player to make the appropriate roll him- or herself. However the GM always has the right to roll the dice on behalf of the player, or in secret, if the GM feels the situation demands it.

In determining the ad hoc chance for success for various tasks, it may be helpful for the GM to look at other similar tasks that have already been defined. For instance, the strength-based chances to Open Doors and/or Bend Bars, the magic user's intelligence-based Chance to Know Spells, and the constitution-based roll to survive System Shocks can all be extrapolated to cover a wider variety of situations. The same applies to saving throws, which consider class and level rather than just raw ability, so that high-level characters will be generally more successful than lower level characters, and each class will tend to have areas of speciality (clerics better at tasks that require a save vs death, Magic users at tasks that require a save vs spells, etc.)

**Book-keeping:** The GM should set up some simple system for book-keeping and may wish to delegate some tasks to the players. The present author, for example, keeps a piece of scratch paper by his books and makes a tally mark when each turn has elapsed, enabling him to see at a glance when to roll for wandering monsters, when the next rest period is required, and when the party has run out of lantern fuel. In extreme cases, if the campaign has grown so large that ten or more players per session is typical, an assistant GM can help—the assistant, or apprentice, GM helps the main GM with book-keeping and organisation, and may help the main GM design new dungeons and adventures, eventually becoming either a co-GM or branching off into a separate sub-campaign.

## Exploring the Wilderness

For the purposes of this section of the OSRIC rules, “Wilderness” can mean any adventure in open

country, including adventures at sea. The basic unit of time for wilderness exploration is the day. It is a good idea for the GM to use paper marked with a hexagonal grid (“hex paper”) to pre-draw maps of the wilderness before the players explore it, if possible.

**Order of Play:** When starting out with OSRIC games, each day should be resolved separately. More experienced GMs sometimes tend to allow the days to run together; but please don't try this until you are certain you know what you're doing. The order of events is as follows:

- **Setup:** The GM advises the party of prevailing weather conditions and the party decides which way to go.
- **Navigation:** The GM checks in secret to determine if the party has become lost.
- **Wandering Monster Check:** The GM rolls for wandering monsters.
- **Move and Act:** Party members move, make stationary actions, or both.
- **Encounter:** Any encounter is resolved.
- **Camp:** The GM indicates what options the party has for a campsite. The party camps.
- **Wandering Monster Check:** The GM rolls for wandering monsters again, and if one is met, begins the resulting encounter.

On the time scales allowed for wilderness adventures, most static actions take negligible time, so as a general rule a player character can combine many static actions with a normal move.

- **Weather and Direction:** While choosing a direction of travel should present no problem to anyone capable of playing OSRIC, determining the weather can be a more complex matter.

Some GMs write campaigns with detailed rules for randomly generating the weather by month or season. Others prefer to decide the weather on the spur of the moment based on their gut feeling or to create a sense of narrative tension. This is not a matter in which generic tables would be helpful—a campaign set in a Norse winterland would need quite different tables to one set in a Caribbean archipelago—so no weather-generation rules are provided here. The GM must decide and advise the party accordingly.

- **Lost:** The party will never become lost if following a road, river or other natural feature, nor if they are following an accurate map, nor if they are travelling over terrain at least one party member knows well. (This could include an NPC guide if one is hired for the purpose.)

Otherwise, the party's chance of getting lost depends on the terrain and prevailing weather conditions. If the party is crossing a flat savannah towards a range of mountains they can see, the chances of becoming lost are negligible, but if they are travelling a forest at night through thick fog, getting lost is virtually guaranteed!

As a guideline, allow a 10%-25% chance of getting lost if the party is crossing normal terrain and taking normal precautions.

If the party does become lost, determine their actual direction of travel randomly. In most cases they will go somewhere within a 60° arc in front of them, but if the roll is particularly bad, the GM may adjust this to 120°. Only in exceptional circumstances will the party get completely turned around.

- **Wandering Monsters:** Normally the GM should make two checks each day, with a 1 in 12 chance of encounter per day, and a third check at night (see below). As always, GM discretion is critical—adjust this frequency downwards if the party is crossing patrolled and civilised terrain, and upwards if they wander into a goblin-infested forest, for example.
- **Movement and Stationary Actions:** See the previous section (on dungeons) and the Movement Rate section in Chapter 2.

- **Encounter Resolution:** The mechanics of this are as in a dungeon, though tactically the wilderness presents entirely different challenges. (Player characters will find horses, missile weapons, and long-range spells much more helpful in the wilderness.)
- **Camping:** The party has to camp if spell casters are to regain their spells. Mounted parties will normally need to rest their animals and armoured player characters, or physically weaker ones, will need rest and sleep. In a forced march situation, the characters could march through the night, but a second night without rest will result in the characters suffering a penalty of -2 or -10% on ability scores, "to hit" and damage rolls, and saving throws from exhaustion. A third night without rest will increase this penalty to -5 and spell casters will begin to forget any spells they still have memorised. At this point, player characters should check their system shock rolls (see Ability Scores, Constitution) or fall asleep involuntarily. No human or Demi-human in OSRIC may go four nights without sleep.

Sensible parties will set a watch rota overnight, with different characters standing watches to ensure the safety of the sleepers.

## Aerial Agility

This section of the rules outlines the basics of aerial movement to assist the GM with flying monsters and movement on flying mounts or otherwise in the air. Flying creatures gain altitude at half their movement rate and dive at a 45° angle, descending 1-ft for every 1-ft of forward movement. Creatures with aerial agility level VI are not subject to these two restrictions (see below). Diving attacks over 30-ft grant a double damage bonus vs non-diving targets, including ground targets. Attacking while climbing incurs no damage or attack penalty. The GM may wish to consider an operational flying ceiling of 5,000-ft above sea level, the upper limit of breathable air without special means on Earth, though a campaign world might be quite different.

Apart from aerial agility level I, the lower level classification of fliers are generally larger, more massive creatures. Lighter and smaller creatures tend to be classed in the higher levels.

Except for very large creatures, such as dragons, riding a flying monster reduces its aerial agility by one step.

The levels enumerated below represent stops along a spectrum of ability, so the GM may assume a small amount of variance within each level. Turning capacity assumes full movement rate; creatures moving at half-speed turn as one class higher. Level II, III, and IV creatures must be moving at least half-speed to remain airborne.

**Level I:** Barely a flying creature, these creatures float on the air, allowing the wind currents to carry them from location to location. These creatures can sometimes slightly alter their direction of travel or move at very slow speeds, but otherwise manoeuvre like a hot air balloon (e.g. *levitate* spell). This category also includes gliding creatures, such as flying squirrels or flying fish, that travel through the air but do not truly fly.

**Level II:** Creature requires 5 rounds to reach full aerial movement rate and can turn 30° per round (e.g. dragon).

**Level III:** Creature can reach full aerial movement rate in 2 rounds and can turn 60° in one round (e.g. sphinx).

**Level IV:** Average agility. Flying creatures of this type reach full airspeed in 1 round and can turn 90° per round (e.g. *flying carpet*, giant bat).

**Level V:** Full airspeed is reached in 6 segments and the flier can turn 120° per round. These creatures can also come to a complete stop in 6 segments and are capable of hovering in place (e.g. *fly spell*, mephit).

**Level VI:** These are creatures born to fly, taking to the air as naturally as a human walks on the ground. Such fliers can reach full speed or complete stop in 1 segment, and can hover. Level VI fliers can easily reverse course in flight, gracefully executing turns of 180°. A Level VI flier has nearly complete control over their movement in the air (e.g. genie, air elemental).

## Special Cases

Movement in sailing vessels depends crucially on the wind. A sailing ship can make progress into wind coming from nearly ahead of her (the process is called “tacking”), but for travel at any great speed, the wind must be from somewhere roughly behind. GMs expecting to run a campaign where lot of action takes place at sea should probably decide on prevailing trade winds, because a purely random way of deciding this will lead to ships making little headway over a statistical long term.

Movement underwater may become an option if the players discover the correct magic items. All missile weapons, many hand weapons and many spells are virtually useless in this environment—assume that magic invoking fire will fail, and if it involves lightning, will most often strike the caster.

## Adventures in Town

Most activities that characters perform “in town”, such as gathering information, hiring men-at-arms or guides, purchasing equipment, liquidating treasure, resting and healing, hiring NPC spell casters to identify unknown magic items or remove afflictions, training to gain new levels, etc. can be handled abstractly. It occurs “offstage”—the players make notes in their records (adding or subtracting the corresponding amounts of gold), the GM notes the number of days that have passed, and the game resumes when the players are next ready to venture into the dungeons or wilderness.

Sometimes the group will wish to play out one or more of these in-town activities rather than relegating them to an offstage between-session limbo. This could be as simple as a few minutes' pre-expedition interviewing potential hirelings, or post-adventure cajoling a local wizard to transform an unfortunate companion back into a human for a reasonable rate, or as complex as a whole session spent gathering intelligence for a major expedition. Some adventures can take place in-town with only brief dungeon or wilderness interludes, such as a murder-mystery or an adventure focusing on diplomatic negotiations or political skullduggery.

Even when these sorts of activities are played out, they still tend to be conducted in a more abstract and free-form manner than a dungeon or wilderness adventure. For instance, in town-based adventures the players rarely if ever draw a map, record-keeping of supplies such as torches or rations is rarely an issue, and a strict marching order may not be necessary or even applicable. Even the notion of keeping the party together often falls by the wayside as one character buys equipment while another gathers rumours from travellers at the inn, and a third visits the local temple. When a less-abstract reckoning is required, such as when the party is venturing into a dangerous Thieves'

Quarter and are in danger of being ambushed and mugged, then the norms and standards of a dungeon exploration will generally apply—time measured in turns, movement in tens of feet (typically at the “travelling” rate of 5× normal, if the party is not mapping or expecting traps), “wandering monster” checks every 3rd turn (though in town such an encounter is usually with a beggar, urchin, pick-pocket, member of the town watch, or one of Gary Gygax's infamous Wandering Prostitutes).

Because adventures in town tend to be so much more free-form than dungeon or wilderness exploration, they can be harder for the GM to run. There is no convenient flowchart of steps, making it easier to overlook things. Also, because town adventures tend to focus more on negotiation and in-character conversation between players and NPCs, the focus is more one-on-one of player to GM. Other players whose characters are not involved in a particular scene can be left sitting around observing and waiting for their “turn” which can lead to player boredom and frustration. For both of these reasons, town adventures are only recommended for experienced GMs, for small groups of players, and for those who particularly enjoy the in-character “play-acting” aspect of the game. Be wary of bored players who might have their characters pick random fights in town just to have something to do, and realise, if this does happen, that the blame can lie as much or more with the GM than with the player.

## Exploring the Planes

These rules mention of the Planes of Existence in many places, but for the purposes of the OSRIC core rules, the authors do not intend to explain very much about them. This is deliberate—the planes are intentionally left blank as a possible route for future creativity. They are for higher-level play (for characters of at least 10th level), when play in the normal game world should be growing too easy. The OSRIC core rules game balance begins to break down at higher levels than this, though enjoyable adventuring in carefully-designed environments may still be possible.

### **At this stage, suffice it to say that:**

The normal campaign world is situated on the Prime Material Plane, wherein things and creatures are generally made of matter (hence “material”). There are two planes immediately contiguous with the Prime Material Plane: the *astral* and *æthereal* planes.

These planes are misty, vaporous places. It is possible dimly to perceive the Prime Material Plane from the astral or the æthereal, but only as shadowy and indistinct shapes and forms. A creature the size of a human is only visible within about 30-ft of the viewer. While certain magical creatures can perceive the astral or æthereal planes or even attack within them, apart from this a character on an alternative plane is completely imperceptible: not just invisible, but silent and similarly concealed from all senses.

A character can use the astral or æthereal planes to pass through solids such as walls on the Prime Material. Such things are not solid at all on these planes. If the character is “inside” a solid object via this route, visibility is zero; the character is effectively blind. He or she must emerge into some open area, or return to the Prime Material will be fatal, no saving throw.

When a player character enters a new plane, he or she makes a “bloink”, like the splash when someone jumps into water. Powerful hostile creatures on the planes can detect the “bloink” and will move to intercept. A character below 10th level may remain on another plane for up to 1d6 turns. Beyond that, assume he or she is consumed by the astral/æthereal equivalent of a grue. In other words, that character is gone, permanently and irrevocably destroyed without any possibility of

raising or resurrection short of a *wish*.

Certain other planes (the elemental planes, the abyss, the hells, the negative material plane, and so on) are mentioned from time to time. These references are deliberately left obscure.

In the planes, things are different. The core rules will not necessarily apply. Magic items and spells may not function as they would elsewhere. "To hit" and damage rolls may vary, as may class abilities, saving throws or indeed anything else at all.

When a character above 10th level desires to explore the planes, as will eventually happen in a long-running campaign, the GM will need to determine what happens there.

By that stage, the authors hope, the GM will be sufficiently experienced to cope with the situation and indeed enjoy rising to the challenge.

The authors would like, in the fullness of time, to release an optional supplement or supplements about the planes, but this will not form part of the OSRIC core rules.

## An Example Dungeon

### Example Dungeon Key

A band of marauding orcs have been sporadically attacking merchant wagons in this area for two months, and the local authorities have hired the party to track down and deal with the creatures once and for all.

Based on the range of the attacks and the local terrain, the orcs are believed to be based somewhere in the nearby foothills. The hills are dotted with mostly uncharted caverns and crevices that are home to creatures of all sorts.

After days of searching and tracking, the party has traced the orcs to a small cave at the southern end of the foothills. A small stream flows into the cave and there is much evidence of foot traffic going in and out.

The party will find the stream is initially shallow and follows the depths of the cave deeper into the hills. As it travels downward, the cave narrows into a tight passageway roughly 4-ft wide and 7-ft in height. Ninety feet in, the stream becomes about 3-ft in depth and flows through Room 1.

### Map Key

- **Guard Cave:** The stream continues through this area and flows out through a smaller tunnel to the north. Attempts to follow the stream will be difficult, if not impossible, as the tunnel rapidly narrows until it is filled by the rushing water.

This cave is occupied by 6 orcs (hp 6, 6, 5, 5, 3, 3) each armed with spears and hand axes. Unless the party takes extreme caution, any entrance through the stream tunnel will cause ripples thus alerting the guards. They will attempt to surprise and attack the first PC to enter by hurling hand axes and then attacking with spear thrusts. Each guard carries 2d6 sp and 2d8 cp on him. This room is occupied with sleeping skins, food of the most terrible sort, and water skins. A crude playing table is covered with a pair of knuckle bone dice, 24 sp and 7 gp.

- **Common Sleeping Area:** All orcs live here unless occupied elsewhere. Enough sleeping skins and cots are present for the entire contingent. A central fireplace creates a smoky atmosphere. This common area is filled with long rough tables, captured tapestries (4 worth 50 gp each; the rest are worthless), assorted silverware and other utensils worth a total of 250 gp, and the stuffed and mounted head of a manticore (the orc leader claims to have slain the creature single-handedly; in actuality he found it already dead from old age and took the head as a trophy... the astute PC will notice the head has no teeth).

12 orcs (hp 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 4, and 4) stay here when not on duty in the GUARD CAVE or needed elsewhere. Of these, ten wear leather armour. Six are armed with spears and hand axes, four are armed with short swords and spears, and the two orcs with 8 hp are armed with broad swords and wearing chainmail armour and carry shields. The two toughest orcs keep on their persons 3d20 gp and 4d8 sp each. The remainder possess 2d6 gp and 2d20 cp each.

- **Arsenal:** Assorted arms captured on raids and not used by the orcs will be stacked in here. The inventory is as follows: 1 stack of 25 spears, 1 pile of 6 daggers, 1 pile of 5 short bows, 2 piles of 5 quivers each (one pile has all quivers fully filled; the second pile has quivers in various states of capacity), 1 stack of 8 short swords, and 1 stack of 5 halberds.
- **Dog Kennel:** The orcs keep 4 war dogs (hp 6, 5, 5, 5) here behind a crude wooden fence, and will retrieve them if any invading force totals four or more. Various bones, both animal and sapient, can be found scattered through this den, but there is nothing of value to be found.
- **Goods Storage:** the orcs keep in this cave all the assorted goods taken during raids. If the party has time, a thorough perusal of the contents will reveal: 3 barrels of oil, 200 lbs of various cloths in bolt form (worth 50 gp total), 30 various iron pots and pans, 14 books on various themes (none magical), 1,500 lbs of lumber cut in various sizes and shapes, 1 keg of large nails, and 4 mounted animal heads (2 large deer, an ogre, and a Pegasus).

## Sample Play Session

**Background:** A party of stalwart adventurers, consisting of Hogarth, human fighter and party caller (player: Bob), Alice, human magic user (player: Mary), Friar Chuck, human cleric (player: Chuck), Groin, dwarf fighter (player: Jason), Floppinjay, elf thief (player: Eric), and Hap, normal man mule-tender(NPC). They are searching for a way down to the ancient ruins of the *Temple of the Serpent-Men*, long sought and thought by most sensible folk to be only a legend until a recent earthquake opened a deep crevasse and turned up some unusual objects of unmistakably ancient origin.

**GM:** After a couple hours searching through the foothills and scrubland to the south and west of the crevasse you've come across something interesting—a small cave-entrance with a shallow stream flowing into it and evidence of foot traffic going both in and out. The cave entrance is approximately 100 yards west of the crevasse where the ruins are. It's now about noon.

**Bob:** Can we tell anything about the tracks—what made them? How many individuals? Do the tracks appear fresh?

**GM:** Whatever made the tracks was about Man-sized and wearing shoes or boots. You're pretty sure there were multiple individuals, not just one person going repeatedly in and out, and most of the tracks appear fairly fresh. You can't really tell anything beyond that without a ranger or other woodsman-type.

**Bob:** Okay, the elf will go down into the cave and scout it out.

**Eric:** Why me?

**Bob:** Because you're a thief so you're sneaky and less likely to get surprised by any monsters that might be lurking down there, and you're an elf so you can see in the dark.

**Eric:** Okay, then, I do what he says—cautiously enter the cave with my sling out, making sure not to step in the stream. What do I see?

**GM:** The cave-entrance is about 10-ft wide and 8-ft high and descends gently as it winds to the north and east. About 30-ft in it turns to the east so you can't see beyond that from where you're standing. It appears to grow narrower as it goes deeper, so if you're going to keep following it, eventually you're going to have to be standing in the stream.

**Eric:** Do I hear anything?

**GM:** [rolls] Just the sound of water dripping and splashing on the rocks.

**Eric:** I'll cautiously move up to the eastward turn and look in that direction—what do I see?

**GM:** Beyond the curve the passage keeps descending and narrowing, and winding in a northeasterly direction. You can see about 40-ft farther, by which point the passage has narrowed to about 4-ft wide and 7-ft tall, filled entirely by the stream.

**Eric:** Okay, from where I'm standing I poke into the stream with my short- sword. How deep is it? How swiftly is it moving?

**GM:** It's not deep, only a foot or two. It's not moving very quickly either, though a bit faster here than at the surface, and it looks to be moving a bit quicker up ahead too. You'd have no trouble standing upright in the middle of it. The water is cool and a little muddy, but fresh.

**Eric:** Can I hear anything here?

**GM:** Same as before.

**Eric:** Okay, I go back and report all this to the rest of the party.

**Bob:** Right on. So as we head in we'll have the elf in front, the dwarf second, me in third, Alice fourth with a torch, then the NPC and the mule...

**GM:** Hap says, "I'm not going in there, and neither is Tom!"

**Jason:** Who's Tom?

**Chuck:** I think that's the mule.

**GM:** [as Hap] Right. We'll wait for you right here until an hour before sunset, then we're heading back to the village whether you come back or not.

**Mary:** But that's not the agreement we made...

**GM:** [as Hap] I just agreed that Tom and I would come with you to look for these ruins and haul back whatever treasure you find. I never said nothin' about following you down into holes in the ground after who-knows-what.

**Bob:** Will you come with us if we pay you an extra gold piece?

**GM:** [rolls reaction die] No.

**Chuck:** Can't we just force him to come with us at sword point and tell him we'll kill him if he doesn't?

**GM:** What's your alignment again, Friar Chuck?

**Chuck:** Lawful good. Why?

**GM:** ...

**Chuck:** Oh. Never mind.

**Bob:** Alright then, the NPC and the mule stay behind. Marching order as before, with the cleric bringing up the rear. The elf has his sling out, the dwarf his crossbow, I've got my spear, Alice is holding the torch, and the cleric has his hammer and shield. Everybody agree?

**All but GM:** Yup.

**GM:** So, as I described before, the passage winds north and slopes down for 10-ft, 20-ft, 30-ft, turns to the east and narrows, then continues winding northeast and narrowing for another 10-ft, 20-ft, 30-ft, 40-ft. By this point the passage is 4-ft wide and 7-ft high and you're all standing in the stream, which is about 2-ft deep.

**Jason:** How deep underground are we?

**GM:** [rolls] Not too far, maybe 15-ft.

**Bob:** We continue forward.

**GM:** Alright. The passage goes east for 10-ft, 20-ft, and curves to the northeast. The slope levels a bit here, the depth of the stream increases to about 3-ft, and the current slows a bit. Over the next 30-ft the passage widens slightly and about 30-ft farther ahead from where you are now the passage appears to widen out into a cavern.

**Bob:** Okay, we proceed forward cautiously, still in single file. Does the elf hear anything?

**GM:** [knows there are orcs in the cave ahead, but because the orcs are alerted to the party's approach both by the light from their torch and the disturbance their passage is making in the stream, they're being quiet as they set their ambush for the party. Nonetheless, he decides, on a roll of 01-05 he might hear something unusual: rolls (79)] Same as before. Splashing and dripping water; nothing more. As you move forward 10-ft, 20-ft, 30-ft the passage opens out into a wider cavern—bigger than the radius of your torchlight. You're entering via the southwest corner. The stream continues northward through the middle of the cavern. Give me a Surprise roll.

**Bob:** [rolls] 2

**All but GM:** \*Groan\*

**GM:** Okay, as you file into the cavern you're caught unawares for 2 segments...

**Eric:** I've got a 16 dex!

**GM:** Right, so Floppinjay is caught for 1 segment and everybody else for 2 segments by a half-dozen brownish-green fellows with bristly black hair and pink pig-snouts. They're currently [rolls] 30-ft away to your right (the east), charging at you and hurling hand axes as they come. Segment 1, they charge 18-ft. Segment 2, they charge the remaining 12-ft, hurl their axes, and pull out spears. Only the first 3 of you are open targets, and only Hogarth and Groin can be hit. [Rolls] 4 attacks on the dwarf, 2 on the fighter. [Rolls] No hits on the fighter, 3 on the dwarf. [Rolls] 7 points total damage. 2 orcs on each of the dwarf, elf, and fighter. Actions for round one.

**Bob:** Attack one of the orcs on me with my spear.

**Eric:** Fighting retreat in a northerly direction.

**Jason:** Drop my crossbow, pull out my axe and attack.

**Chuck:** Can I move forward into the room?

**GM:** No, Alice is blocking your way.

**Chuck:** Right-o, then. I'll wait for her to clear the way...

**Mary:** Do we see or hear any orcs besides these 6?

**GM:** No.

**Mary:** Then I'll drop my *sleep* spell right in the middle of the crowd.

**GM:** OK, initiative. Beat a [rolls] 2.

**Bob:** [rolls] 1. Crap!

**GM:** The 2 orcs on Floppinjay follow him north and attack [roll] 1 miss, 1 hit. [rolls] 3 damage.

**Eric:** Aiee!

**GM:** 2 attacks on Hogarth [rolls] miss, miss. 2 attacks on Groin [rolls] miss, hit. [rolls] 5 damage.

**Jason:** I'm down, -3 hit points.

**GM:** You're not dead but you're unconscious and bleeding. You're also underwater...

**Jason:** \*Gurgle, gurgle\*

**GM:** Bob, you're up.

**Bob:** Attacking the orc on the left. [rolls] 10.

**GM:** That's a miss...

**Mary:** I step forward so Chuck can squeeze by and get to Jason. Then I cast my spell.

**GM:** [rolls] The 4 orcs who were attacking Hogarth and Groin are all affected, and so is Hogarth. Floppinjay and the 2 orcs who were on him are out of the area of effect.

**Mary:** Good going...

**Eric:** Sorry.

**Chuck:** Can I get to Jason's body?

**GM:** Yeah, you're able to drag him onto shore on the west side of the stream. Actions for next round?

**Jason:** I bleed.

**Bob:** I snore, and inhale water, I suppose.

**Mary:** I wake up Hogarth.

**Chuck:** I administer a *cure light wounds* to Jason.

**Eric:** I suppose I need to fight these guys alone? I drop my sling and get out my short sword to attack.

**GM:** Initiative. [rolls] Eric, beat a 3.

**Eric:** [rolls] Boo-ya! 4! Attacking the one on my right [rolls] 14.

**GM:** Near miss. The blow catches on his shield.

**Eric:** These guys have shields?

**GM:** Yep. Studded leather armour and shields. Armed with spears. [Considers morale of the orcs—they've lost more than 50% of their party. The GM assigns +15% for this; plus another 40% for the 4 allies down, -20% for the 2 PCs down; additional ad hoc -25% because they're fighting an elf and have him outnumbered 2:1. Total modifier +10%; rolls 54 = the orcs will disengage and retreat]. The 2 orcs disengage and retreat towards a passage in the southeast corner of the cave.

**Eric:** Can we chase them?

**GM:** Sure, next round. They've got a 30-ft head-start, and are 10-ft from the exit at the end of this round. Chuck's spell goes off and Jason gets [rolls] 8 hit points back. You're still unconscious, though, because you went below zero. Mary wakes Bob up and he spits out some water. The 4 orcs are still asleep but it looks like the choking from inhaling the water is going to wake them up next round. Actions?

**Bob, Mary, and Chuck:** Finish off the sleeping orcs before they wake up.

**Eric:** So we're not gonna chase those two that ran away? OK, I finish off the other sleeping orc.

**GM:** Done. As the two orcs flee out of the room you hear one of them calling out in orcish something that sounds like "unleash the Dogs of War." Now what?

**Mary:** We look around the room. What do we see? How big is it?

**GM:** The cave is irregularly-shaped, approximately 50-ft wide east-west by 90-ft long north-south. The stream enters via the southwest corner and exits in the middle of the north wall. There are 5-ft wide passages out of the northeast and northwest corners, both going roughly east. The 2 orcs fled down the southeast passage. The ceiling is about 15-ft high in the centre of the cavern, about 8-ft high on the two passages, much lower on the stream going north. West of the stream there's nothing but dirt and rocks. On the east side there are piles of sleeping skins, vile looking foodstuffs, waterskins, and a crude table that appears to have a pair of dice and some coins on it.

**Eric:** I check out the table. What type and how many coins are there? Is there anything else on the table?

**Mary:** I use my staff to sort through the piles of bedrolls and food. Do I find anything interesting or unusual?

**Bob:** Chuck and I pull the orc bodies onto the west shore of the stream and examine them. Do any of them have any jewellery or unusual accoutrements? Does any of them look like a leader-type?

**GM:** There are about 2 dozen silver and 7 gold coins on the table. Aside from the dice there's nothing else there. You find a few copper and silver coins but nothing else of interest in the bedding. None of the orcs appears to be a leader-type; none of them has any treasure or unusual item aside from a few more copper and silver coins. You hear voices down the southeast passage—they're speaking in orcish and it sounds like way more than two of them.

**Bob:** Alright, let's gather up the silver and gold coins and the dice I suppose, and beat a retreat back to the surface. Chuck and I will carry Groin's body, Alice will light the way with the torch and Floppinjay will bring up the rear. I assume it's still daylight outside?

**GM:** It's been, like, half an hour tops.

**Bob:** Right, so these orcs probably won't try to pursue us into daylight.

**Eric:** Hold up, I'm not leaving yet. I dump out my two oil flasks by the southeast passage and want to set up a trip-wire with an ember to ignite the pool when someone crosses it. Can I do that?

**GM:** Sure, you've got the same chance to set a trap as you do to disarm one.

**Bob:** What are you doing? Come on!

**Eric:** I want to give these guys something to remember us by.

**Bob:** Whatever, the rest of us aren't waiting. Catch up when you're done...

**Eric:** Okay, so I'm setting the trap. What do I need to roll?

**GM:** Well, first, give me a d6 roll.

**Eric:** Umm, why?

**GM:** For surprise...

**Eric:** [rolls] 5! Ha!

**GM:** You turn to see 4 large dogs bearing down on you from the northeast passage. They're currently 80-ft away and charging.

**Mary:** I guess those are the “dogs of war,” eh? I figured that was just a code-phrase, like “Hey, Rube”...

**GM:** Nobody but Eric is in the room. Initiative? [rolls] Beat a 6.

**Eric:** [rolls] 5, +1 for my Dex because I'm using a missile. So 6, tie!

**GM:** You can get a shot off before they reach you, then.

**Eric:** [rolls] Attacking dog #2; [rolls] 15 +1 for Dex = 16. That's got to be a hit!

**GM:** Yep.

**Eric:** [rolls] 3 points damage.

**GM:** Dog #2 whimpers and holds up, but the other 3 continue their charge and leap to attack, attempting to drag you down. You're bigger than them so you get a +4 defence bonus, but there's 3 of them, so they get +2 attack on their attack, meaning they need 14 or better to knock you down. [Rolls] 18—down you go! Action for next round?

**Eric:** I'm going to stand back up and pull out my short sword.

**GM:** And the dogs, all 4 of them, will try to hold you down. Initiative: beat a [rolls] 6-1 = 5!

**Eric:** [rolls] 5! Tied again!

**GM:** We'll say you're on your knees by the time the dogs attack. So they get +2 for that, +6 because there's 4 of them attacking, and you lose your Dex bonus [rolls] 3+8 = 11; that's enough—they've got you held.

**Eric:** So what can I do now?

**GM:** You can try to break free next round by making a Bend Bars roll.

**Eric:** Guess that's what I'll do then. [Rolls] 18.

**GM:** Nope. The dogs still have you held. You get one more chance to break free...

**Eric:** [rolls] 64. Nope.

**GM:** ...before a group of 8 orcs including 2 leader-types in chain-mail and carrying broadswords enter via the southeast passage and see you lying there. "Ha ha, look what the mutts dragged down!"

**Eric:** I surrender!

**Mary:** Umm, don't orcs normally refuse to take elves as prisoners?

**GM:** 'fraid so...

**Eric:** Blerg.

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