



Shadows & Dragons

Rules

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Game Overview

Shadows & Dragons is an uncomplicated fantasy RPG for solo or small-group play with an AI Game Master, built around a 2d6 PbtA-style core mechanic.

- It values role-play, simplicity, showing rather than telling, and running adventures from other systems with little conversion.
- Shadows & Dragons is directly inspired by Beasts & Barrows and by games of the Old School Renaissance (OSR) movement, such as Basic Fantasy RPG.

Character Creation

Create a concept, choose an ancestry, roll six attributes on 2d6, then choose two skills and two abilities.

- Warrior, Thief, Mage, and Priest are classic concepts, but any concept can be built from the skills and abilities.
- Ancestry grants no attribute bonus, though the GM may allow darkvision or an extra language for good fictional reasons.

Attributes

Roll 2d6 for STR, DEX, INT, WIS, CHA, and CON, then assign the results in any order.

- STR covers melee attacks, climbing, and lifting.
- DEX covers ranged attacks, stealth, and dodging.
- INT covers mage spellcasting, memory, and deduction.
- WIS covers cleric spellcasting, perception, and searching.
- CHA covers persuasion, deception, and intimidation.
- CON covers extra HD, endurance, and resisting poison.
- Play uses only an attribute's modifier, such as +2, never the raw roll (see Attribute Modifiers).
- For example, a caster with 1 HD and CON 6 has a CON modifier of +0, so their safe casts are $1 + 0 = 1$.
- For example, a warrior with STR 10 adds +2 to melee attacks, not 10.

Attribute Modifiers

Attribute rolls convert to modifiers before play.

- A roll of 2 gives -1, 3 to 6 gives +0, 7 to 9 gives +1, 10 to 11 gives +2, and 12 gives +3.

Core Resolution

Describe what the character does. Only risky actions call for a roll.

- An action is risky when failure would cost something: harm, time under threat, noise, or a lost chance. A careful action with nothing at stake needs no roll; it simply takes its time.
- A risky action rolls 2d6 plus the fitting attribute modifier; a fitting skill adds advantage (see Skills).
- When another character helps and that help could really change the outcome, the roll has advantage; help that adds nothing gives none.
- When the consequences could be lethal, the GM may give one last description of the danger and ask whether the player still wants to roll.

Outcome Bands

After modifiers, 6 or less is a miss, 7 to 9 is a partial success, and 10 or more is a success. Natural criticals depend on the two kept dice before modifiers.

- A natural critical failure is two kept 1s, and a natural critical success two kept 6s. Natural criticals override the modified outcome band.
- On a critical success, the action succeeds as fully as the fiction allows and gains one fitting extra benefit. Attacks and damaging spells deal maximum normal damage and ignore Armor, healing restores its maximum normal amount, an investigation turns up a second, deeper fact or the next step forward, and other actions may gain useful information, speed, position, scope, goodwill, or saved resources.
- On a critical failure, the action fails and one serious immediate consequence tied to the established risk replaces the ordinary miss consequence. A melee counterattack gains advantage, and a critical spell failure triggers a magical mishap. A critical failure brings one consequence, never a stack, and never death, permanent injury, or destroyed equipment unless that danger was already established.
- A partial success succeeds with a cost. A miss fails, or succeeds only at a worse cost, and the danger acts.
- A cost follows from what is at stake, and changes the situation rather than repeating the last cost.
- Outside combat: harm, a foe acting or a new threat, a delay that costs time, noise that may draw attention, a spent, lost, or broken item or resource, lost bearings, a worse position, an unintended effect, the party's light going out (relighting takes a turn), or an unwelcome truth.
- In combat: a worse position (knocked down, cornered, within reach of a second foe, cut off from an ally), a weapon stuck, dropped, or notched, a shield strap torn (no shield Armor until it is mended), the light going out, an ally left exposed, a foe slipping away or grabbing something, harm from the surroundings such as a fall or a burn, or disadvantage on the next roll; never a foe's attack.
- A success or partial success always gives the characters something concrete: a fact, an edge, or progress. "Nothing is here" is an answer only when nothing is there; if the place holds something that bears on what they are looking into, a success reveals a real, specific piece of it.

Skills

Each character has two skills. When a skill applies in the fiction, roll with advantage: 3d6, keep the best two, then add the attribute modifier.

- Athletics covers climbing, jumping, swimming, grappling, forcing a path, and other overt feats of strength or agility.
- Athletics uses STR for brute force and DEX for balance, speed, or precise bodily control; the fiction decides which applies.
- Awareness covers immediate sensory notice: ambushes, hidden danger, movement, suspicious sounds, fresh tracks, or something out of place.
- Awareness does not solve puzzles, identify lore, or persuade creatures.
- Deception covers lying, disguises, forged impressions, false excuses, and other attempts to make someone believe what is not true.
- Deception is not for honest negotiation, morale, or command; Sway covers those.
- Decipher covers riddles, codes, clues, symbols, maps, magical scripts, strange notation, and figuring out what a text or puzzle means.
- Decipher is for interpretation and problem-solving, not broad historical knowledge; Lore covers what the character already knows.

- Heal restores 1d6 plus level HP by touch, outside active combat.
- Heal is for treatment and recovery, not for battlefield healing in an ongoing fight, noticing poison, enduring hardship, or recalling anatomy trivia.
- Lore covers remembered knowledge: history, monsters, customs, religion, occult facts, famous people, and what such things are known for.
- Lore does not crack active puzzles or read unknown scripts by itself; Decipher covers understanding the clues in front of the character.
- Stealth covers hiding, sneaking, shadowing, muffling noise, and staying unseen or unheard.
- Stealth is not lockpicking, trapwork, or deception by words, and no one hides from creatures that can see the light they carry.
- Survival covers tracking, foraging, navigation, reading weather, making camp, enduring exposure, and staying functional in harsh conditions.
- Survival uses WIS for fieldcraft and reading the land, and CON for endurance, resisting exposure, or pushing through harsh conditions.
- Sway covers persuasion, leverage, diplomacy, intimidation, bargaining, morale, and getting someone to go along openly.
- Sway is not for lies or disguise; Deception covers falsehood.

Abilities

Each character has two abilities, which add flavor and specialized capability.

- Backstab gives +3 damage on a hit against a target that is unaware of the character, fully distracted, or attacked from clear concealment.
- Bless spends a flask of holy water to bless one weapon or a small group of similar items; for the current scene they count as magical and either gain +3 damage against appropriate foes or impose -3 damage when used as a protective ward, as the fiction fits.
- Cantrips lets the character perform minor magical tricks at will without spending a safe cast: small sensory effects, moving tiny unattended objects, lighting or snuffing a flame, cleaning or soiling something, or another harmless effect of similar scale.
- Cantrips do not deal direct damage, impose strong control, or replace full spells.
- Connected means that in any settlement or organized camp the character can usually name or locate one plausible contact, fixer, gossip, fence, or debtor; the GM decides who they are and what they want.
- Hardy gives +6 maximum HP.
- Linguist lets the character speak and understand all common spoken civilized languages well enough to converse, negotiate, and gather information.
- Lucky may be used once per day after a failed roll, to treat the result as a partial success instead of a miss.
- Penitent gives advantage on the character's next roll after they knowingly accept damage, loss, or hardship without avoiding it.
- Pet grants one loyal animal companion suited to the campaign; it follows simple commands, helps within its nature, and matters in the fiction, but it is no stronger than a trained animal of its kind.
- Reflexes means the character is never surprised by an ordinary ambush and acts before others on tied initiative; where a stricter procedure is needed, they roll initiative with advantage.
- Ritual lets the character perform slow occult workings from texts, circles, relics, sacrifices, or rare materials; rituals always take time, require fitting fictional components, and may produce broad effects beyond normal spellcasting.

- Scout lets the party move at a good pace without blundering into obvious danger, and gives advantage on rolls to detect an ambush, pick a safe route, or establish who spots whom first.
- Shield gives +2 Armor while the character wears no armor and carries no shield.
- Shift lets the character take the form of a known animal after tasting blood; while shifted they gain its natural movement and obvious features, cannot use normal gear, and must pass a CON roll to return at will.
- Skirmish gives +1 damage with weapon attacks and makes any armor worn count as one category lighter for movement and stealth.
- Slay gives +2 damage on melee weapon attacks.
- Tinker gives +1 on related rolls for lockpicking, trapwork, sleight, and simple sabotage, and broadens what the character can reliably do with suitable tools.
- Tough gives +1 Armor.
- Turn lets the character present faith, relic, or holy authority against undead; on a success they recoil, halt, flee, or cannot approach for a short time, depending on the fiction and the undead's strength.
- Versed lets the character communicate basic hidden meaning within their own underworld, military, mercantile, or cultic subculture through signs, cant, marks, and coded phrasing.
- Vision lets the character ask a higher power, spirit, deity, or demon for insight through prayer, trance, omen-reading, or sacrifice; answers are true but may be brief, symbolic, delayed, or costly.
- Volley gives +2 damage on ranged weapon attacks.
- Wild lets the character speak with natural animals and try to calm, guide, or command them; when a roll is needed, it is 2d6 plus WIS. Wild is an ability, so it grants no advantage or extra bonus by itself, and animals still will not reliably act against instinct, training, hunger, or fear.

Hit Points

Starting HP comes from 2d6 plus one more d6 per point of CON modifier, keeping the highest die.

- For example, a level 1 character with CON +1 rolls 3d6 and keeps the highest die; with CON -1, they roll 1d6.
- Each level that grants +1 HD (2, 4, 6, 8, and 10) adds 1d6 to maximum HP, rolled when the level is gained.
- A living character at current HP equal to maximum HP is unhurt, however low their maximum. Only HP below maximum, or an established condition, means they are wounded.
- A comfortable rest restores HP to maximum (see Rest).

Last Breath

When a character drops to 0 HP, they roll 2d6 plus CON to see whether they die, bargain with Death, or barely survive.

- Last Breath applies to player characters, not monsters.
- Every death goes through Last Breath. An effect that would kill a character outright, such as lethal poison, a deadly trap, or death magic, instead drops them to 0 HP, and they roll Last Breath.
- At 6 or less, the character dies.
- At 7 to 9, the character meets Death and must bargain for life.
- Death offers four prices: one skill at random, one ability at random, one maximum HP, or one gear item at random.
- The player chooses which price to risk, then Death chooses the exact loss at random within it.

- At 10 or more, the character lives, but in terrible shape.
- A character who survives Last Breath, by a bargain or by rolling 10 or more, stays alive at 0 HP, unconscious and unable to act. Add the condition Unconscious with update_party, with lasts "1 hour": the game brings them round with 1 HP when it is up, and healing brings them round at once.

Rest

A comfortable rest restores every living character to maximum HP and resets their safe casts. It comes from a fed, undisturbed camp in the wilderness or a night at a tavern in a settlement.

- A camp is fed when the party eats a ration or a hunt or forage succeeds (see Hex Crawl). A fed camp that nothing disturbs is a comfortable rest.
- When an encounter breaks into the night, or the party pushed past a full day (more than 8 hours of travel, delving, or city time), the camp is an uneasy rest: each living character rolls 2d6 plus CON, and on 7 or more gains the full benefits of rest; below 7, they gain none.
- A hungry camp gives no rest and no rest roll, however quiet the night.
- A night at a tavern is always a comfortable rest, even after a long day. It also clears Hungry and Starving, and applies any level-ups the characters have earned (see Levels and Milestones).
- A party that stays active past 12 hours in a day, in any crawl, is exhausted: its next rest, at a camp or a tavern, restores nothing. The GM warns the party when it passes 8 hours and again at 12.
- There is no rest in a dungeon: it is too dangerous to sleep or recover there. Binding wounds is fine, but to rest the party leaves and camps outside, or goes back to a tavern.
- In a settlement, the party can only sleep at a tavern; the watch moves along anyone sleeping in the streets, a temple, or a doorway.

Combat

Once a hostile encounter becomes active, combat begins immediately. Everyone rolls 1d6 plus DEX modifier for initiative, and that order holds until the fight ends.

- Combat begins on the spot when a hostile monster or NPC becomes actively aware of the characters or otherwise enters immediate conflict.
- While the characters plausibly remain unnoticed because of stealth, distance, darkness, cover, distraction, or similar fiction, they may keep avoiding conflict or setting up an approach until the creature notices them or they openly engage.
- Creatures meet the party with an attitude of their own, from friendly to hostile.
- Surprise follows from distance and the situation: a party that stays hidden or keeps its distance may act first or avoid notice, while a creature that springs an ambush at close range acts first. A party carrying a light can't surprise a creature that can see it (see General Gear).
- The GM announces the initiative order from highest to lowest and runs every round in that order. Initiative is not rerolled between rounds; a combatant who joins mid-fight rolls when they join and takes their place in the order.
- On tied initiative, the party acts before its foes. Within one side, a creature with Reflexes goes first, and the GM decides any other tie, without a roll.
- On a combat turn, a combatant may attack, cast, maneuver, try to defuse the situation, retreat, or take another meaningful action.
- If a melee or close attack against an active opponent misses and the fiction does not clearly prevent retaliation, the target gets an immediate chance to strike back as the consequence.
- No other attack grants a counterattack: not a hit, a partial success, a missed ranged attack, or a

missed spell.

- Resolve damage in this order: roll the dice and add modifiers, apply every resistance and vulnerability affecting that damage, then subtract the target's Armor, to a minimum of 0.
- A resistance halves damage and a vulnerability doubles it. When both apply to the same damage, apply both; they cancel out.
- Setting a target alight applies the Burning condition. The igniting strike is still resolved as a normal attack; it does not change the damage type of that blow.
- Ongoing damage such as burning, bleeding, or acid resolves at the start of the affected creature's turn, before it acts. A creature reduced to 0 by ongoing damage does not act that turn.
- A character may spend their turn trying to shake off an ongoing effect by rolling the related save or check, unless the established effect says otherwise.
- A monster's HP comes from its HD.
- Morale is tested once for the whole group, never creature by creature: when the first of them goes down, and again when half or more are down. A monster alone tests when reduced to half HP or less. A group that fails its test runs together. Undead and constructs never test morale.
- Morale is a 2d6 roll read on the outcome bands. For intelligent creatures, a success means they stay and fight, a partial success that they try to negotiate, and a miss that they run away. For non-intelligent creatures, a success or partial success means they stay and fight, and a miss that they run away.
- Combat continues until defeat, retreat, surrender, or another fictional resolution ends it.

Retreat

Breaking off from melee takes 2d6 + DEX per character; a pursuit is decided by speed, or by one roll with the party's best DEX; the same procedure runs the other way when the party gives chase.

- Each character breaking off from melee rolls 2d6 + DEX. At 10 or more, they break away cleanly. At 7 to 9, they get away at a cost: the foe lands a parting blow, or they drop something they carry. At 6 or less, they are caught: the foe strikes, and they are still engaged.
- A character breaks off without a roll when an ally stays engaged with the same foe and covers them, and the fiction makes clear the foe is not focused on that character.
- If the foes give chase, speed decides it first: a creature tagged fast or flying catches a party on foot, and one tagged slow never does. A creature pursues only where it can move: an aquatic one stays in the water.
- Otherwise the party rolls once, with the best DEX among them. At 10 or more, they escape. At 7 to 9, they escape at a cost, such as gear dropped on the way, a wrong turn, or time lost. At 6 or less, the pursuers are on them.
- Dropping food or treasure the pursuers want gives the party advantage on that roll; mindless creatures and undead ignore it.
- A clean escape resolves the encounter. A pursuit still on when the party leaves the scene makes the encounter ongoing: it follows them into the next scene.
- Pursuers give up. A pursuit that follows the party into a new scene lasts only on 1-2 on the die of fate, rolled when that scene opens; on 3-6 they have given up. Pursuers who lose one of their own or are badly hurt in the chase test morale, and a failed test ends it.
- Creatures bound to a place, such as guardians, nesting animals, and undead tied to a tomb, stop at its edge: they never follow the party out of their lair, room, or dungeon. None follow it into a settlement.
- When the party gives chase to fleeing creatures, the same procedure runs the other way: the fleeing creatures break off and outrun the party by the same tests.

Die of Fate

The GM rolls the die of fate when sheer chance or uncertain world state is the main factor.

- Low numbers mean ill fortune and high numbers mean good fortune.
- It suits weather, NPC attitude, or any outcome driven mostly by chance. Wandering monsters and city trouble are rolled by the game, never with the die of fate (see Danger).

Magic

A caster masters spells equal to level plus 2, and can safely cast spells equal to HD plus CON between comfortable rests (see Rest).

- Casting a spell requires a casting roll: 2d6 plus INT for mages or WIS for clerics, read on the outcome bands.
- Cantrips are cast at will and require a roll, but do not spend a safe cast.
- A safe cast is spent whether the casting roll lands or fails, and a cast never spends more than one. The cost of a partial success comes from the fiction: the spell is weaker, briefer, or narrower than hoped, or the casting draws attention or leaves the caster exposed; never an extra safe cast.
- Casting beyond the safe limit causes 1d6 plus spell level damage per extra spell cast.
- A sustained spell lasts until the end of the scene. Inside a dungeon it lasts until the party leaves the dungeon.
- A lasting spell lasts as its effect says, beyond the scene and the dungeon, such as until it is dispelled, destroyed, or obeyed.
- A spell that affects weaker creatures affects those whose HD is no more than the caster's level + 1; a character counts their level as HD.
- Spell damage adds the caster's level, and gains an extra 1d6 at levels 5 and 10.
- On level-up, mastered spells may be swapped for new ones.
- A magic item's once-per-scene or once-per-delve power is marked used with a condition, such as "Saintglass Shield spent", added with `update_party`; it comes back when the scene ends, or in a dungeon when the party leaves it.
- A wand casts the spell it holds once per scene for whoever wields it, with a casting roll on INT or WIS, whichever is higher. It spends no safe cast, and a miss can bring a mishap; its use is marked spent like any item power.

Scrolls

Spells can be cast from scrolls; casting one takes a combat turn and a casting roll.

- Identifying a scroll's spell before casting it is wise.
- Anyone can cast a spell from a scroll. A mage rolls with advantage (3d6, keep the best two) plus INT, a cleric with advantage plus WIS, and anyone else with disadvantage (3d6, keep the worst two) and no casting modifier.
- Casting a scroll consumes it. It does not spend a safe cast or cause overcasting damage.

Magic Mishaps

A failed casting can trigger a magical mishap, and a critical failure always does.

- Mishaps include the spell reflecting back at the caster, 1d6 plus level damage to the caster, a short harmful status effect, the spell affecting the party, a cosmetic transformation such as turning blue, or

simply nothing happening.

Time

Each crawl keeps time in its own unit: 10-minute dungeon turns, city turns of about an hour, and hours of the wilderness travel day.

- A dungeon turn is 10 minutes. Moving from one room to the next takes one turn; searching a room, forcing a door, or a long parley takes one or more. How often wandering monsters are checked depends on the dungeon's danger (see Danger).
- A city turn is about an hour. Spend turns only on activities that take that long, such as searching a district, waiting, a long negotiation, or working a trade; a conversation, a drink, or a quick purchase takes no turn.
- In a settlement, the time of day follows the hours already spent that travel day, counting from morning: hours 0 to 1 are morning, 2 to 3 midday, 4 to 5 afternoon, 6 to 7 evening, and 8 or more night.
- Wilderness time is counted in hours of the 8-hour travel day: entering a hex costs its terrain's hours (see Hex Crawl), and a delay such as searching, scouting, or waiting spends whole hours.
- Time underground or in a settlement counts toward the same travel day: dungeon turns at 10 minutes each, rounded up to whole hours, and city turns as hours. A long delve or city day can push the party past 8 hours, or exhaust it past 12 (see Rest).
- Combat is counted in rounds of about 10 seconds, in which each combatant takes one combat turn; a "turn" anywhere else means a dungeon or city turn. Rounds are counted only during combat: outside it, an effect that lasts a number of rounds ends once the moment that caused it has passed.

Danger

A place's danger sets how often trouble finds the party: hourly in the wilderness, every few turns in a dungeon, every few hours in a settlement. The game rolls it; the GM shows the danger in the fiction and never names the rating.

- Hexes are Safe, Unsafe, Risky, or Deadly, and dungeons Unsafe, Risky, or Deadly. A settlement's pace is set by its alignment: a Chaotic settlement is troubled more often.
- Ratings are pressure, not description. The GM never names them in the fiction; signs, the behavior of people and creatures, and plain warnings show them, especially before a long wait or rest.
- Wilderness: each stretch of time in a hex rolls once, at its danger's hourly chance (see Hex Crawl).
- Dungeon: a wandering monster check comes every 6 turns in an Unsafe dungeon, every 4 in a Risky one, and every 2 in a Deadly one, and brings something on a 1 in 6. Only monsters that can move come wandering. When something in the fiction may have drawn attention, the GM may call a check at once; one already due that turn covers it.
- Dungeon entrance: approaching a dungeon has a 1 in 6 chance that something waits outside, drawn from the encounters typical of that kind of site rather than its wandering monsters, rolled once per approach.
- Settlement: city trouble is checked every 3 city turns, or every 2 in a Chaotic settlement, and comes on a 1 in 6, from the district's own troubles or the settlement's active problems.
- The game makes every one of these rolls; the GM never rolls its own. When a roll brings something during a wait, the wait ends there and the next scene opens with it.
- Wandering creatures don't linger. When time passes (a wait, a night) while a creature met this way is still nearby and not fighting, the GM rolls the die of fate: on 1-2 it is still there, on 3-6 it has moved on. One that has fed, been driven off, or lost interest leaves without a roll. This roll only decides whether it

stays; it never brings anything new.

Falling

A fall deals 1d6 damage for every 10 feet beyond the first 10; Armor reduces it as usual.

- The first 10 feet of a fall deal no damage. Each further full 10 feet adds 1d6: 20 feet is 1d6, 30 feet 2d6, 50 feet 4d6.
- Armor reduces falling damage like any other damage. A fall that brings a character to 0 HP means Last Breath.

Drain

A draining attack, such as a shadow's chill or a ghost's touch, leaves the victim Drained in one ability: disadvantage on rolls using it for 1d6 turns. It never lowers an ability score, and never kills on its own.

- On a draining hit, add the condition with `update_party`, naming the ability, such as "Drained (STR)", with lasts "1d6 turns". The game rolls the length out of sight and ends the condition when its time is up.
- Another drain of the same ability while it lasts stacks on top: add the same condition again with lasts "1d6 turns", and the new time adds to what is left.
- Drain is in addition to any damage the attack deals; HP damage is what can bring a character to 0 HP and Last Breath.

Death's Touch

The touch of certain undead, such as wights, wraiths, and spectres, reaches for a character's life: each draining hit is resisted with 2d6 + CON, and a miss takes a Death's price, as in Last Breath, for good. It never removes levels.

- On each draining hit, the victim rolls 2d6 + CON. At 10 or more, they resist it. At 7 to 9, they pay no price but are Drained (CON), as in the Drain rule. At 6 or less, they pay a Death's price.
- Paying a Death's price works as in Last Breath: the player chooses which kind to risk, one skill, one ability, one maximum HP, or one gear item, then the GM rolls which one at random within it and records the loss with `update_party`.
- A Death's price taken by undead is permanent, like a Last Breath bargain.
- A monster that takes more than one price on a hit, such as a spectre, takes them all on a miss and one on a 7 to 9 instead of draining.
- Any damage the touch also deals is ordinary HP damage, and is what can bring a character to 0 HP and Last Breath.

Poison

Lethal venom is resisted with 2d6 + CON: at 10 or more only the attack's damage lands, at 7 to 9 the victim is Poisoned for the rest of the scene, and at 6 or less they drop to 0 HP and roll Last Breath.

- A save against poison is 2d6 + CON, read on the outcome bands.
- Lethal venom: at 10 or more, the victim takes only the attack's damage. At 7 to 9, they are Poisoned: disadvantage on all rolls until the scene ends. At 6 or less, the venom would kill: they drop to 0 HP and roll Last Breath.
- A venom described as harder to resist is saved against with disadvantage; one described as easier, with advantage.

- Add Poisoned with `update_party`, with lasts "scene": it ends when the scene does. Neutralize Poison ends it sooner; remove it with `update_party` then.
- Venom that is not lethal does what its monster says, using the same save.

Petrification

A petrifying gaze, touch, breath, or bite is resisted with $2d6 + CON$: at 7 to 9 the victim stiffens, and at 6 or less they turn to stone, which is a death that goes through Last Breath.

- At 10 or more, the victim is unaffected. At 7 to 9, they are Stiffening: grey and slow, with disadvantage on STR and DEX rolls until the scene ends; failing another save against petrification while Stiffening counts as 6 or less.
- At 6 or less, they turn to stone: they drop to 0 HP and roll Last Breath. If they die, they remain a statue. If they survive, the stone cracks and flakes away when the scene ends, leaving them at 0 HP and Unconscious, as after any Last Breath.
- A character who averts their eyes from a gaze, or fights by a mirror's reflection, makes no save against it, but attacks with disadvantage.
- Add Stiffening with `update_party`, with lasts "scene": it ends when the scene does.

Disease

A disease is the condition Sick, which stops rest from restoring HP and is rolled at each rest with $2d6 + CON$; a healer in a settlement can cure it for a fee.

- A diseased character has the condition Sick, naming the disease, added with `update_party`. While Sick, rest restores no HP, and a night at an inn or a camp's dawn brings a roll of $2d6 + CON$: at 10 or more the disease ends; at 7 to 9 it holds; at 6 or less they lose 1 maximum HP for good. A character with the Heal skill tending them gives this roll advantage.
- A healer in a settlement, such as a temple, an herbalist, or a wise woman, cures a disease for a fee, typically 5 gp, paid with `update_party`. The Cure Disease spell also ends one.
- Some diseases say they never end on their own: for them, a 10 or more only holds them, and only a cure ends them.
- Some diseases have an onset or a deadline. When it comes uncured, the character drops to 0 HP and rolls Last Breath; what happens to one who dies is in the monster's text.

Charm and Possession

A charmed or possessed character is played by the GM until the charmer is dead or the scene ends, whichever comes first.

- While charmed or possessed, the character acts as the charmer wishes, and the GM plays them; the player plays the rest of the party.
- It ends when the charmer dies, or when the scene ends. A monster's text may end it sooner, such as a second save when led into obvious danger, or turning the undead that possesses them.
- A save against charm or possession is $2d6 + WIS$.

Wandering Monster Treasure

A defeated wandering monster leaves treasure on a 4 to 6 on 1d6, determined from its HD or effective level.

- After a wandering monster is defeated or otherwise leaves loot behind, roll 1d6: 1 to 3 means no treasure and 4 to 6 means treasure is present.
- The treasure comes from the monster's HD or effective level, never an invented amount.

Hex Crawl

Hex travel uses an 8-hour fair-weather travel day, destination-entry terrain costs, weather pressure, road benefits, foraging checks, and danger-based wilderness encounters.

- A fair-weather travel day is 8 hours.
- Terrain time is paid to enter the new destination hex only; the hex being left costs nothing more.
- Destination terrain time per hex: Grassland or Desert 2 hours; Forest or Hills 4 hours; Mountains or Swamp 8 hours.
- Water is impassable unless the party has a crossing, boat, bridge, magic, or another established method.
- When the remaining hours fall short of the next hex, the party may push on into it if the travel day stretches by no more than 4 hours in all, to 12. That night no one can hunt or forage, and the camp is an uneasy rest (see Rest). Past 12 hours, the day is spent: the party camps.
- At the start of each travel day, bad weather comes on a 1 in 6.
- Bad weather makes terrain one step harder for travel time and exposure.
- Roads either make the destination terrain one step easier for travel time, to a minimum of 2 hours, or negate bad weather for that route.
- If the party travels no more than 8 hours that day, one character may hunt or forage, rolling with WIS; a fitting skill gives advantage.
- Hunting or foraging is done while the party makes camp and takes no travel hours.
- One ration feeds the entire party for one camp.
- Companions see to their own food; a successful hunt or forage feeds them too.
- When the party completes camp, it eats one ration unless a successful hunt or forage fed it that day.
- A partial success when hunting or foraging feeds the party at a cost, such as a delay, exposure, or a complication. The cost is never a ration: the hunt was meant to save one.
- A camp with no ration and no successful hunt or forage is hungry: no one rests (see Rest), and every living character gains the Hungry condition.
- A character who is already Hungry and completes another camp without food becomes Starving instead.
- A Starving character rolls with disadvantage on all rolls.
- A fed camp, or a successful hunt or forage, clears Hungry and Starving.
- Each stretch of wilderness time makes one encounter roll at most; one action never brings more than one encounter.
- The roll uses the terrain being entered for travel, or the hex the party is in for waiting and camp. The hourly chances are Unsafe 1 in 30, Risky 1 in 20, and Deadly 1 in 10, multiplied by the whole hours spent and rolled once.
- A full camp counts as 8 hours. Safe hexes normally make no encounter roll.

Inventory

Characters have 12 plus CON inventory slots and cannot carry more gear than that.

- Each non-empty gear entry takes one inventory slot.

- Rations take one slot each.
- A character cannot take or carry gear that would exceed available inventory slots; they leave it in the scene or drop other gear first.

Weapons

Weapons are grouped into light, martial, great, shortbow, bow, and heavy bow or gun categories with fixed damage.

- Light weapons cost 10 silver, deal 1d6 damage, and may be used in the off hand to reroll damage once per attack.
- A melee attack with a light weapon adds STR or DEX, whichever is higher; other melee weapons add STR, and ranged weapons add DEX.
- Martial weapons cost 30 silver and deal 1d6+1.
- Great weapons cost 40 silver, use two hands, and deal 1d6+2.
- Shortbows cost 30 silver and deal 1d6.
- Bows cost 40 silver and deal 1d6+1.
- Heavy bows or guns cost 50 silver and deal 1d6+2 when fired from a stationary position.
- Ranged weapons come with enough ordinary projectiles or ammunition for normal use; ammunition does not need to be tracked or mentioned separately.

Armor

Armor subtracts damage taken.

- Light armor costs 30 silver and gives Armor 1.
- Full armor costs 60 silver and gives Armor 2, always includes a helm, and makes running, stealth, swimming, and leaping very difficult.
- A shield costs 10 silver and gives +1 Armor.
- Armor reduces damage from any source, including spells, unless a specific spell, ability, or effect states that it ignores armor.

General Gear

Gear, services, and property are priced in silver; 10 silver make 1 gold.

- Characters carry money as gold pieces (gp): 1 gp = 10 silver = 100 copper, so a 30 silver price costs 3 gp.
- A backpack costs 2 silver.
- A ration feeds the whole party for one camp and costs 10 silver by default, though local prices may vary.
- An adventuring kit (10 silver) holds whatever ordinary gear the fiction calls for: rope, chalk, a lantern or torches, a waterskin, and the like. It never covers anything priced separately, valuables, or magic. For a truly unusual item, the GM rolls the die of fate to see whether it is in the kit.
- Light is not counted: a party with an adventuring kit has a torch or lantern for its delves. What matters is who carries it.
- Whoever holds the light can't use a two-handed weapon, or a shield with a one-handed weapon, and a shield gives no Armor while its user holds the light.
- The light can be lost as the cost of a roll: dropped, doused, or blown out. Relighting takes a turn.

- In darkness, every roll is at disadvantage, except for a character with darkvision.
- Light gives the party away: while it carries a light, the Light spell included, it can't surprise or hide from creatures that can see it.
- Tools cost 5 silver each.
- Occult items cost 10 silver each.
- Occult items are not used up by a ritual, but they can break as the cost of a failed action.
- Holy water costs 10 silver a flask. Thrown at undead or a demon, it deals 1d6 damage on a hit; the Bless ability spends one.
- Fancy items cost 20 silver each.
- Fire oil costs 20 silver per flask and deals 1d6+1 damage per round for 3 rounds unless extinguished.
- Standard gear sells for half its listed price.
- Treasure found in play, such as gems, art, and magic items, sells for its listed value to a buyer who wants it; coins are already gold.
- A night's lodging is priced for the whole party by the tavern's quality: 2 silver at a poor one, 10 silver at a standard one, 50 silver at a wealthy one, and 100 silver at an extravagant one.

Levels and Milestones

Characters advance by finishing things: each session that completes something earns a credit, and the next level takes one credit more than the current level.

- A session runs from one night at an inn to the next. Resting there closes it, and the GM judges whether the party finished something during it for the first time: what lay at a dungeon's heart dealt with, a job delivered and paid, a settlement's trouble resolved, or a thread of the party's own brought to an end.
- A session that finished something earns every living character one credit, at most one per session, and the GM says why it did or didn't. Travel, shopping, loot, and partial progress earn nothing.
- A character levels up at the town rest once their credits since the last level-up reach their current level plus one: 2 credits to reach level 2, 3 to reach level 3, and so on.
- Level 1: 1 HD with starting HP (see Hit Points), 2 skills, and 2 abilities.
- Level 2: +1 HD.
- Level 3: +1 skill and +1 ability.
- Level 4: +1 HD and +1 attribute (to a maximum modifier of +3).
- Level 5: +1d6 damage.
- Level 6: +1 HD and +1 skill.
- Level 7: +1 attribute (to a maximum modifier of +3) and +1 ability.
- Level 8: +1 HD.
- Level 9: +1 skill and +1 ability.
- Level 10: +1 HD, +1 attribute (to a maximum modifier of +3), and +1d6 damage.

Credits

Shadows & Dragons is an independent project, not affiliated with or endorsed by any game or publisher named here.

Material used

- Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game (basicfantasy.org), © 2006-2024 Chris Gonnerman, CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0). The game's monsters and spells are adapted from it - converted to this game's format, shortened, and rewritten - and are shared under the same license. Its treasure chapter inspired the gems and jewelry you'll find.
- Sandbox Generator (drivethrurpg.com/en/product/430675/sandbox-generator), © 2023 Atelier Clandestin (atelierclandestin.net). Its landmark tables are adapted with the publisher's permission.

Inspiration

- Beasts & Barrows (casadeocio.itch.io/beasts-barrows) by brine (Casa de Ocio) - the 2d6, fiction-first core the rules are built on, itself grown from John Harper's World of Dungeons (johnharper.itch.io/world-of-dungeons).
- Shadowdark RPG (thearcanelibrary.com/pages/shadowdark) by The Arcane Library - the game that opened the door to old-school play for us. This is not a Shadowdark-compatible product.
- Dungeon World (dungeon-world.com) by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel - the model for the compact monster format.