

What is Dungeons & Dragons?



D&D is a table-top pen & paper role-playing game. Each player takes on the role of a hero and directs the actions that hero attempts to do in the game world. Most of the game takes place in your imagination. It's like playing "let's pretend" but with different dice helping you figure out if your actions worked or not. Players join forces to cooperatively and creatively solve problems (rescue the princess, save the townspeople, get through the maze of traps, find the lost magical artifact in the dungeon, destroy the evil ring, etc.) which lead to rewards (more powerful abilities, items of wonder and power, fame, fortune, etc.) in the game. It can also be thought of as a group exercise in writing a fantasy novel – everyone gets to play one of the main characters and dictate their words and actions.

When trying to figure out what type of character you'll play, think of action, anime, superhero or fantasy movies, TV shows and books – if there's a certain character from these you'd like to play, we can work on getting your character as close to your concept as possible. On the next few pages you'll see what choices you have to bring your character concept to life.



Why Are We Playing This Game?

Dungeons & Dragons develops some good skill sets. Some of the benefits from playing the game are:

- 1) Cooperative Experience—you have to learn to work together as a team so that everyone has fun and everyone accomplishes their goals. In order to excel at the game you have to listen to your teammates, think ahead, and try to work out possible solutions to in-game challenges.
- 2) Problem Solving—You learn to use the skills and abilities of your character to overcome in game challenges. Playing together with others gives you a chance to work on your problem solving skills in a safe, non-threatening environment.
- 3) Spend time with friends and classmates—D&D brings together a diverse group of people. You may or may not end up playing with your friends, but you might discover new friendships or deepen existing friendships. All of my best friends play either this game or other card, online or role-playing games—you might discover life-long friends through this game as well.
- 4) Practice Your Math Skills!—You'll be using addition and subtraction every game session, as well as a bit of multiplication. You'll also get a chance to work with dimensions and probabilities. (Don't worry—it's more fun than it sounds!)
- 5) Stretch Your Imagination—almost all the action takes place in your head. This is a great way for your creativity to be expanded.
- 6) Develop A Love of Reading—you've already read quite a bit—your character sheet will involve more reading, and if you really like the game and keep playing after you leave OLS you'll end up reading the actual books to learn how to play and/or DM.
- 7) Stretch Your Vocabulary—you'll find many older or obscure words as you play—but think of the great SAT scores you'll get later on! :)
- 8) Taking A Break—school and life can be stressful sometimes—this game gives everyone a chance to put issues aside and focus on a fantasy world for a little bit of time. Just like you can unwind with sports, exercise, video games, TV/movies or music, D&D gives you a chance to unwind as well.
- 9) Meet New People—if you continue playing, you'll find that some of the most interesting and educated people play this game (or others like it). Even here, you may be on a team with someone you don't normally spend a lot of time with.
- 10) Have Fun—first and foremost this game is meant to be played and enjoyed with others. It's a great way to socialize off the net or the cell phone, a great way to blow off steam, and a great way to enjoy yourself with others.

1st Choice: Race (Page 1 of 2)

Pick one of these for your character:

Gnome: Slight, sly tricksters of the Feywild who excel at avoiding notice

Halfling: Resourceful wanderers, cunning scouts, travelers of forgotten roads

Dwarf: Stout warriors, master artisans, lords of the mountain peaks who favor warrior and divine classes

Elf: Unmatched archers, cunning explorers, protectors of the wild forests

Eladrin: Powerful wizards, haughty courtiers, creatures of the mysterious Feywild

Tiefling: Cursed heirs of a shattered empire who live in the shadows, but do not fear the dark.

Human: Ambitious explorers, driven leaders, eager to master the world

Shadar-Kai: Cold of heart and dark of eye, passion still burns within these people of shadow and deep winter

Shifter: Ferocious heirs of the wild, the perfect fusion of civilized race and wild beast (sort of like were-wolves)

Pixie (not pictured): Small, winged creatures of magic and wonder. Flight and limited invisibility are their strongest weapons (1' tall).

A character's race tells you the origins of your character in the world (which part of the world he or she comes from) as well as giving you a little bit of background about the kind of culture he or she was brought up in. Any race can be any class—there are no restrictions.



1st Choice: Race (Page 2 of 2)

Genasi: Living embodiments of earth, air, fire, water or storm.

Half-Orc: Descendants of humans and orcs, they are proud, strong and agile.

Warforged: Magical living beings of earth, stone and/or machinery.

Deva: Eternal servants of the gods of Good, they are reborn to continue the fight against the darkness.

Dragonborn: Proud, honorable warriors born of the blood of an ancient dragon deity.

Minotaur: Warriors who struggle to control the beast within.

Gnoll: Quick, brutal tacticians who strike without mercy.

Goliath: Mountain dwelling nomads who approach all their lives like a competition.

Changeling (not pictured): Shapechangers, able to look like any other humanoid race.

Half-Elf (not pictured): Descended from both humans and elves, they combine the best features of both.

Kalashtar (not pictured): Refugees coming to our plane from the Dream Realm.

Shade (not pictured): A human whose soul is infused with a dark essence.

The races listed on these two pages are not all of the possible choices for your race.

If you have a unique character concept let me know and we can work together to try to get as close as possible to your idea.



Genasi
5'11"



Half-Orc
6'0"



Warforged
6'3"



Deva
6'4"



Dragonborn
6'5"



Minotaur
7'2"



Gnoll
7'3"



Goliath
7'5"

2nd Choice: Class (Page 1 of 4)

Defenders

You stand in front of your allies, protecting them from harm and daring enemies to attack you. Your main role is to get up close and personal with evil creatures and keep their attention while your allies help take them down.

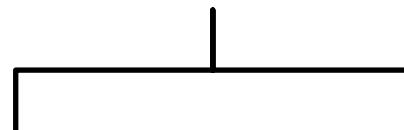
Fighter: heavy armor, heavy shield and a weapon are all you need to protect your friends and smite your foes; some fighters also try using one large weapon, or two light weapons (Key Stats: Strength, Constitution and Dexterity)*

Paladin: calling upon holy power you vanquish evil and heal the afflicted (Key Stats: Strength, Constitution, Wisdom OR Charisma, Wisdom, Constitution)*

Swordmage: you are a hand to hand combatant who uses arcane magic to help defeat your foes (Key Stats: Intelligence, Constitution)*

Warden: you draw on the primal spirits to assume the shape of an animal or tree to protect your allies and the natural world (Key Stats: Strength, Constitution Wisdom OR Strength, Wisdom, Constitution)*

* Key stats are explained on the last page



A character's class is like their job or profession. It tells you what kind of combatant they are, and what kind of special skills and powers they have.



2nd Choice: Class (Page 2 of 4)

Leaders

You help your team with tactics, healing and/or support abilities while still taking care of yourself and helping vanquish foes.

Artificer: you use magical formulas to channel energy into items, assembling a device to help in almost any situation. (Key Stats: Intelligence; then Constitution & Wisdom)*

Bard: you channel arcane power through song or a musical instrument (Charisma; then either Intelligence or Wisdom)*

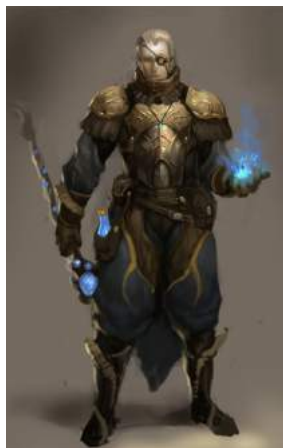
Cleric: a servant of divine power, your prayers smite foes and bolster allies. Clerics can focus on hand-to-hand skills (Key Stats: Strength & Wisdom) or on ranged spellcasting (Key Stats: Wisdom & Charisma)*

Druid (Sentinel): you channel nature's power to shelter your allies and defend the natural world (Key Stats: Wisdom, then Constitution)*

Warlord: you stand toe to toe with your enemies while issuing commands that improve your whole team (Key Stats: Strength, then Charisma or Intelligence)*

* Key stats are explained on the last page

Each class falls into four broad categories: defenders, leaders, controllers and strikers. The best groups usually have one of each type (if there are more than four people to a group, extra strikers are always a good option).



2nd Choice: Class (Page 3 of 4)

Controllers

Your abilities affect large groups of allies or enemies, or they help shape and control the field of battle, moving people or setting up barriers.

Bladesinger: you combine arcane might and martial prowess, smiting foe with blade and spell. (Key Stats: Intelligence & Dexterity)*

Druid: one with the natural world, you assume the forms of animals and call upon nature's fury; you can choose to be a primary shapeshifter or a primary spellcaster (Key Stats: Wisdom; then Constitution & Dexterity)*

Invoker: imbued with divine power, you speak words of power and shape reality to your will (Key Stats: Wisdom; then Intelligence & Constitution)*

Wizard: you tap the raw power of the cosmos, crafting spells to weaken, disable or defeat large groups of enemies (Key Stat: Intelligence; then Constitution or Wisdom)*

* Key stats are explained on the last page

*Classes are also divided by how they get their power. Martial heroes derive their powers from their own physical attributes: **Fighter, Ranger, Rogue and Warlord** are good examples. Arcane heroes channel the power of magic: **Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock & Wizard** are good examples.*



2nd Choice: Class (Page 4 of 4)

Strikers

You're at your best dealing one on one with your foes, either up close and personal or from far away with bow or spell

Avenger: you swear a holy vow to pursue divine vengeance against the foes of your faith (Key Stats: Wisdom; then Dexterity or Intelligence)*

Barbarian: a proud and fierce warrior, you deal out powerful blows with your mighty weapon (Key Stats: Strength, then Dexterity)*

Fighter: you wield one large weapon to rain down devastation on your foes (Key Stats: Strength, then Dexterity)*

Ranger: a master of the bow or of dual swords, you track your enemies down to the ends of the earth; may also have an animal companion (Key Stats: Dexterity; if going for dual weapon build then Strength)*

Rogue: a master of cunning and stealth who strikes from the shadows; ranged rogues prefer the hand crossbow; hand to hand rogues prefer small, light weapons (Key Stat: Dexterity)*

Sorcerer: you strike your enemies down wielding the powers of dragons, chaos, the cosmos or the elements (air, earth, fire, water or storm) (Key Stats: Charisma; then Dexterity (chaos & storm), Strength (dragon or cosmos); or Constitution (air, earth, fire or water).*

Warlock: you draw arcane energy from extra dimensional powers (Key Stats: Constitution OR Charisma; then Intelligence, then Constitution or Charisma)*

* Key stats are explained on the last page

Divine heroes derive their power from their faith in their deity: Avenger, Cleric, Invoker and Paladin are good examples.

Primal heroes derive their power from nature itself: Barbarian, Druid and Warden are good examples.



Character Creation (Turn this page in to Mr. D.)

1. Your Name: _____
2. Your Character's Name: _____ (think fantasy!)
3. Write in the Race you want (pages 3-4): _____
4. Check the role you want to play (pages 5-8): Defender Leader Controller Striker
5. Write in the Class you want to play (pages 5-8): _____
6. Look at the stats listed below. Figure out which ones are more important for your character concept. Number them from 1 to 6, with 1 being the stat that you think is most important for your character and 6 being the lowest. You may only use each number once. Re-read the description of the class you want to play to help you put in these numbers (I'll adjust them if I think the game will play better).
 - _____ **Strength:** your physical power; usually important for hand-to-hand fighters
 - _____ **Constitution:** your health, stamina and vitality; you get more hit points/health with this score; important for defenders
 - _____ **Dexterity:** measures hand-eye coordination, agility, reflexes and balance; important for bow use and for stealth
 - _____ **Intelligence:** how well you learn and reason; important for wizards
 - _____ **Wisdom:** measures common sense, perception, self-discipline and empathy; important for most Divine characters
 - _____ **Charisma:** measures force of personality, persuasiveness & leadership; important for sorcerers, warlocks and paladins
7. What is your general outlook on life?
 - Good: you favor freedom and kindness (*protecting the weak is just the right thing to do*)
 - Lawful Good: you favor civilization and order (*an ordered society protects us from evil*)
 - Unaligned: you don't take any particular stand (*just let me go about my business*)
8. Write me a brief description of how you see your character. Include their background, what they look like, what they wear, what they carry, what they hope to accomplish, and any special powers, equipment or abilities you think they should have (I'll try to make it work as best I can—you probably won't get everything exactly the way you write it here).
9. Anything else you want me to keep in mind when I make your character? Tell me here (or on the back of this page)!