

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS**

## 4TH EDITION AT D&D EXPERIENCE 2008

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### **1. Character roles are more clearly defined.**

Everyone who's played D&D knows that there are roles for each character - some characters "tank", some characters are "artillery", etc. 4th Edition defines those roles into four types - controller, defender, leader, and striker. Controllers (like wizards) deal with large amounts of enemies at once, favoring offense over defense. Defenders (like fighters and paladins) are the front-line characters that have great defensive abilities and good melee offense. Leaders (like clerics and warlords) are good at aiding other members of the party by healing, inspiring, or protecting them. Strikers (like rangers, rogues, and warlocks) deal large amounts of damage to single targets at one time and quickly move about the battlefield. Most adventuring parties consist of at least one character of each of the roles.

### **2. Powers give you more combat options.**

Clerics chant prayers, wizards incant spells, and fighters attempt exploits. These are all examples of powers - your suite of combat options. Three power sources - arcane, divine, and martial - are presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Each character class draws abilities from one of these power sources: clerics and paladins use divine powers (prayers), warlocks and wizards use arcane powers (spells), and fighters, rangers, rogues, and warlords use martial powers (exploits).

You get a number of powers based on your character's level. Powers can be used at-will, once per encounter, or once per day depending on the power.

**TIP:** Use your at-will powers instead of using basic attacks. They'll frequently do more than just a modest amount of damage to one enemy.

### **3. Attacker rolls against a static defense.**

In 4th Edition, you have 4 defense values - Armor Class, Fortitude, Reflex, and Will. The attacker chooses an attack, rolls 1d20, adds the attack bonus, and calls out the result against the appropriate defense. The defenses are all static numbers, just like Armor Class was in 3rd Edition. Attack actions involve a "to hit" roll against any and all targets, so a power that targets all enemies within 1 square requires a separate attack roll against each enemy affected.

**TIP:** If you make an attack against multiple targets, you don't roll damage for each target - just roll that once. It's best when you attack multiple targets to roll damage first, and then roll your attacks.

### **4. Standard, move, and minor actions.**

Each time it's your turn, you get one standard, one move, and one minor action. Standard actions are usually attacks, move actions are usually used to move, and minor actions are little things like drawing a weapon or opening a door. You can always exchange a standard action for a move action or minor action, or a move action for a minor action. There are also free actions, which take almost no time or effort, such as dropping a held item or talking. You can take free actions during your turn or anyone else's turn, and as many as you like (within reason).

There's another category of actions called triggered actions - these include opportunity actions (like opportunity attacks) and immediate actions (like a readied action). Your DM can tell you more about those should you need them.

### **5. Healing gets an overhaul.**

Hit points still measure your ability to stay in the fight, but healing's no longer just the burden of one character anymore. Each character has a certain number of healing surges. Once during each encounter, you can take a standard action called a second wind; this gives you a certain amount of hit points back equal to your healing surge value and gives you a +2 bonus to all your defenses until the start of your next turn. You then tick off one of your healing surges for the day. Some powers (like some cleric prayers) will also heal you your healing surge value, and you'll tick off your healing surges for them as well. When you run out of healing surges, you'll want to take an extended rest.

If you're outside of combat, you can take a short rest and tick off the healing surges you need to heal up damage.

**TIP:** If you've been knocked down a few hit points and can't decide what to do when it's your turn, taking a second wind action is a good idea.

### **6. Short and extended rests.**

Resting's now divided into two groups - short and extended. A short rest lasts 5 minutes, and is a long enough time for you to regain your encounter powers and use healing surges to heal up. An extended rest is akin to "camping" and lasts 6 hours. After an extended rest, you're fully healed, you have a full compliment of healing surges, you have your daily powers back, and you reset your action points to 1.

**TIP:** It's good to take an extended rest when some members in the group are down to about 1 healing surge remaining, or everyone has used all their daily powers.

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### 7. Attack!

Attacks are divided up into a few different types. Melee attacks are those you make usually when you're adjacent to your target. Ranged attacks can be made at any distance up to the maximum range of the attack; however, if you take a ranged attack next to an enemy you provoke an opportunity attack against you. Close attacks affect an area starting with squares adjacent to you; these attacks don't provoke an opportunity attack. Area attacks usually affect an area at range; these attacks do provoke opportunity attacks.

Most of the time when you take an attack, you'll use one of your powers. However, there are some times when you'll use a basic attack - just a regular old swing of the sword or shot from the bow. These attacks are less powerful than using powers, but they can get the job done. You'll use a basic attack when you're charging, making opportunity attacks, or when you use certain powers.

### 8. Action points give you an extra action.

You begin each adventure with 1 action point, and you can get another one for every 2 encounters that you complete (called a milestone). You can spend 1 action point per encounter to take one extra action on your turn. It can be a standard, move, or minor action.

When you take an extended rest, your action points reset back to 1.

**TIP:** Make sure to spend action points at least once every other encounter (as often as you earn them), since you can only spend one per encounter.

### 9. Movement is quick and easy.

Each character has a speed listed in squares. One 1-inch square equals one five-foot square in the game world. When you take a move action, you can move up to the indicated number of squares. Moving from one square to another, even diagonally, costs 1 square of speed. Sometimes terrain will slow you down, costing you more than 1 square of speed - this is called difficult terrain.

Moving away from an enemy adjacent from you usually provokes an opportunity attack. However, you can also use a move action to shift; this lets you move one square without suffering an opportunity attack from adjacent enemies.

**TIP:** If you need to get somewhere fast, you can run as a move action. This gives you +2 speed for your move, but you grant any attackers combat advantage until the beginning of your next turn.

### 10. Saving throws are straightforward.

Sometimes your character will be hit by an ongoing effect, like taking poison damage or being immobilized. When this happens you'll usually get to make a saving throw to remove the effect at the end of your turn. Saving throws are simple - just roll 1d20. If you roll a 10 or higher, you'll end the effect. If you roll a 9 or lower, the effect will usually continue until you have to make another saving throw at the end of your next turn. Some characters have bonuses that can be applied to certain types of saving throws, and some powers grant modifications to saving throws as well.

### 11. Durations are easy to manage.

Most effects that have durations (usually imparting a condition on the target) last either until the target makes a saving throw to ward it off, or until the end of the next turn of the attacker that caused the nasty effect. A few effects have durations that last through the entire encounter. No more tracking rounds to determine when your effect ends!

### 12. Reach (usually) isn't as threatening.

Reach (possessed by some monsters and weapons) is only "active" on the attacker's turn. Otherwise, attackers with reach function just like those without reach. This is usually most relevant when determining the area a character or monster threatens.

**TIP:** Watch out for the few creatures with threatening reach - they can threaten more than just squares adjacent to them.

### 13. A trio of "c" rules you might want to know.

- **Combat Advantage** - This gives you a +2 bonus to attack rolls when you're flanking, or when the target is under one of a number of conditions (dazed, surprised, etc.).
- **Cover** - If an enemy has cover, you get a -2 penalty to attack rolls against it. Your allies don't provide cover, but enemies do. There's also no penalty for making ranged attacks into melee.
- **Charging** - This is a standard action. Move up to your speed, and make a basic attack. You get a +1 bonus on the attack roll. You have to move at least 2 squares from your starting position, and you must charge to the nearest square from which you can attack your target. You can't charge if the nearest square is occupied, but you can charge over difficult terrain (it just costs you extra movement).