

Step-by-Step Character Creation

Choose a Character Sheet

You'll record the main details of your character on a character sheet. Throughout this chapter, we use the term “character sheet” to mean whatever you use to track your character's details, whether it's a printed character sheet, a digital character sheet, or plain paper. Choose whichever style of sheet works for you, and then embark on creating a character!

Create Your Character

Here are the steps to make a character; each step is explored in detail:

1. **Choose a Class.** Every adventurer is a member of a class. A class broadly describes a character's vocation, special talents, and favored tactics.
2. **Determine Origin.** A character's origin includes two elements: background and species. How did the character spend the years leading up to a life of adventure? Who are the character's ancestors? You can also choose your character's languages.
3. **Determine Ability Scores.** Much of what your character does in the game depends on the character's six abilities.
4. **Choose an Alignment.** Alignment is a shorthand for your character's moral compass.
5. **Fill in Details.** Using the choices you've made, fill in the remaining details on your character sheet.

Step 1: Choose Class

Choose a class, and write it on your character sheet. The Class Overview table summarizes the classes. See “Classes” for the classes' details.

Class Overview

Class	Likes ...	Primary Ability	Complexity
Barbarian	Battle	Strength	Average
Bard	Performing	Charisma	High
Cleric	Gods	Wisdom	Average
Druid	Nature	Wisdom	High
Fighter	Weapons	Strength or Dexterity	Low
Monk	Unarmed combat	Dexterity and Wisdom	High
Paladin	Defense	Strength and Charisma	Average
Ranger	Survival	Dexterity and Wisdom	Average
Rogue	Stealth	Dexterity	Low
Sorcerer	Power	Charisma	High
Warlock	Occult lore	Charisma	High
Wizard	Spellbooks	Intelligence	Average

Write Your Level

Write your character's level on your character sheet. Typically, a character starts at level 1 and advances in level by adventuring and gaining Experience Points (XP).

Write Your XP. Also record your Experience Points. A level 1 character has 0 XP.

Starting at a Higher Level. Your GM might start you at a higher level. If you start at level 3 or higher, write your chosen subclass on your character sheet. See the “Starting at Higher Levels” section later in “Character Creation” for more information.

Note Armor Training

Your class might give you training with certain categories of armor. Note your armor training on your character sheet. Armor training with a kind of armor means you can wear that armor effectively, gaining defensive bonuses from it. The categories of armor are described in “Equipment.”

Step 2: Character Origin

Determining your character's origin involves choosing a background, a species, and two languages.

A character's background represents the place and occupation that were most formative for the character. The combination of background, species, and languages provides fertile soil for your

imagination as you ponder your character's earliest days.

Choose a Background

Choose your character's background, and write it on your character sheet. You can choose any of the backgrounds detailed in “Character Origins,” and your GM might offer additional backgrounds as options.

The background you choose influences step 3, when you determine your character's ability scores. If you're having trouble choosing, the Ability Scores and Backgrounds table shows which backgrounds benefit which ability scores. Look for your class's primary ability there.

Ability Scores and Backgrounds

Ability	Background
Strength	Soldier
Dexterity	Soldier
Constitution	Soldier
Intelligence	Acolyte
Wisdom	Acolyte
Charisma	Acolyte

Record Your Feat. A background gives you a feat, which grants your character particular capabilities. Feats are detailed in “Feats.” Write the feat on your character sheet.

Note Proficiencies. Your background gives proficiency in two skills and with one tool. Record this information on your character sheet.

Your class also gives proficiencies. Check your class description in “Classes” and note the proficiencies on your character sheet.

The features table in your class description shows your Proficiency Bonus (described in “Playing the Game”), which is +2 for a level 1 character. Note this number on your character sheet. You'll fill in other numbers connected to these proficiencies in step 5.

Choose Starting Equipment

Your background and class both provide starting equipment. Any coins that you gain at this step can be immediately spent on equipment from “Equipment.”

Record your chosen equipment on your character sheet. Equipment is described in “Equipment,” but for now you can just write it all down and look up the specifics in “Equipment” later. Note any coins you have left after purchasing your equipment.

Choose a Species

Choose a species for your character. The following species options are detailed in “Character Origins”: Dragonborn, Dwarf, Elf, Gnome, Goliath, Halfling, Human, Orc, and Tiefling. Once you've chosen a species, write it on your character sheet. Then record your species' traits.

Your character's size and Speed are determined by the character's species; record these in the appropriate places on your character sheet as well (you may write just the first letter of your size).

Imagine Your Past and Present

Let your character's background and species inspire how you imagine their past. That past fed into the character's present. With that in mind, consider answers to the following questions as your character:

- Who raised you?
- Who was your dearest childhood friend?
- Did you grow up with a pet?
- Have you fallen in love? If so, with whom?
- Did you join an organization, such as a guild or religion? If so, are you still a member of it?
- What elements of your past inspire you to go on adventures now?

Choose Languages

Your character knows at least three languages: Common plus two languages you roll or choose from the Standard Languages table. Knowledge of a language means your character can communicate in it, read it, and write it. Your class and other features might also give you languages.

The Standard Languages table lists languages that are widespread in the setting. Every player character knows Common. The other standard languages originated with the first members of the most prominent species in the setting and have since spread widely.

Standard Languages

1d12	Language
—	Common

1	Common Sign Language
2	Draconic
3-4	Dwarvish
5-6	Elvish
7	Giant
8	Gnomish
9	Goblin
10-11	Halfling
12	Orc

The Rare Languages table lists languages that are either secret or derived from other planes of existence and thus less widespread in the worlds of the Material Plane. Some features let a character learn a rare language.

Rare Languages

Language
Abyssal
Primordial*
Celestial
Sylvan
Deep Speech
Thieves' Cant
Druidic
Undercommon
Infernal

- Primordial includes the Aquan, Auran, Ignan, and Terran dialects. Creatures that know one of these dialects can communicate with those that know a different one.

Step 3: Ability Scores

To determine your character's ability scores, you first generate a set of six numbers using the instructions below and then assign them to your six abilities. “Playing the Game” explains what each ability means.

Generate Your Scores

Determine your ability scores by using one of the following three methods. Your GM might prefer you to use a particular one.

Standard Array. Use the following six scores for your abilities: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8.

Random Generation. Roll four d6s and record the total of the highest three dice. Do this five more times, so you have six numbers.

Point Cost. You have 27 points to spend on your ability scores. The cost of each score is shown on the Ability Score Point Costs table. For example, a score of 14 costs 7 of your 27 points.

Ability Score Point Costs

Score	Cost
8	0
9	1
10	2
11	3
12	4
13	5
14	7
15	9

Assign Ability Scores

Once you've generated six scores, assign them to Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, keeping in mind your class's primary ability. Fill in the ability modifiers as well.

If you're using the Standard Array option, consult the Standard Array by Class table for suggestions on where to assign scores for your character's class. The table puts the highest scores in a class's main abilities. If you used a different method to generate the scores, you may still use this table to guide where you place your highest and lowest scores.

Standard Array by Class

Class	Str.	Dex.	Con.	Int.	Wis.	Cha.
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Barbarian	15	13	14	10	12	8
Bard	8	14	12	13	10	15
Cleric	14	8	13	10	15	12
Druid	8	12	14	13	15	10
Fighter	15	14	13	8	10	12
Monk	12	15	13	10	14	8
Paladin	15	10	13	8	12	14
Ranger	12	15	13	8	14	10
Rogue	12	15	13	14	10	8
Sorcerer	10	13	14	8	12	15
Warlock	8	14	13	12	10	15
Wizard	8	12	13	15	14	10

Adjust Ability Scores

After assigning your ability scores, adjust them according to your background. Your background lists three abilities; increase one of those scores by 2 and a different one by 1, or increase all three by 1. None of these increases can raise a score above 20.

Some players like to increase their class's primary ability, while others prefer to increase a low score.

Determine Ability Modifiers

Finally, determine your ability modifiers using the Ability Scores and Modifiers table. Write the modifier next to each of your scores.

Ability Scores and Modifiers

Score	Modifier
3	−4
4–5	−3
6–7	−2
8–9	−1
10–11	+0

12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20	+5

Step 4: Alignment

Choose your character's alignment from the options below, and note it on your character sheet.

The game assumes that player characters aren't of an evil alignment. Check with your GM before making an evil character.

“ Unaligned Creatures

Most creatures that lack the capacity for rational thought don't have alignments; they are unaligned. Sharks are savage predators, for example, but they aren't evil; they are unaligned.

The Nine Alignments

A creature's alignment broadly describes its ethical attitudes and ideals. Alignment is a combination of two factors: one identifies morality (good, evil, or neutral), and the other describes attitudes toward order (lawful, chaotic, or neutral).

The summaries of the alignments below describe the typical behavior of a creature with that alignment; individuals can vary from that behavior.

Lawful Good (LG). Lawful Good creatures endeavor to do the right thing as expected by society. Someone who fights injustice and protects the innocent without hesitation is probably Lawful Good.

Neutral Good (NG). Neutral Good creatures do the best they can, working within rules but not feeling bound by them. A kindly person who helps others according to their needs is probably Neutral Good.

Chaotic Good (CG). Chaotic Good creatures act as their conscience directs with little regard for what others expect. A rebel who waylays a cruel baron's tax collectors and uses the stolen money to help the poor is probably Chaotic Good.

Lawful Neutral (LN). Lawful Neutral individuals act in accordance with law, tradition, or personal codes. Someone who follows a disciplined rule of life—and isn't swayed either by the demands of those in need or by the temptations of evil—is probably Lawful Neutral.

Neutral (N). Neutral is the alignment of those who prefer to avoid moral questions and don't take sides, doing what seems best at the time. Someone who's bored by moral debate is probably Neutral.

Chaotic Neutral (CN). Chaotic Neutral creatures follow their whims, valuing their personal freedom above all else. A scoundrel who wanders the land living by their wits is probably Chaotic Neutral.

Lawful Evil (LE). Lawful Evil creatures methodically take what they want within the limits of a code of tradition, loyalty, or order. An aristocrat exploiting citizens while scheming for power is probably Lawful Evil.

Neutral Evil (NE). Neutral Evil is the alignment of those who are untroubled by the harm they cause as they pursue their desires. A criminal who robs and murders as they please is probably Neutral Evil.

Chaotic Evil (CE). Chaotic Evil creatures act with arbitrary violence, spurred by their hatred or bloodlust. A villain pursuing schemes of vengeance and havoc is probably Chaotic Evil.

Step 5: Character Creation Details

Now fill in the rest of your character sheet.

Record Class Features

Look at your class's feature table in “Classes,” and write down the level 1 features. The class features are detailed there too.

Some class features offer choices. Make sure to read all your features and make any offered choices.

Fill In Numbers

Note these numbers on your character sheet.

Saving Throws. For the saving throws you have proficiency in, add your Proficiency Bonus to the appropriate ability modifier and note the total. Some players also like to note the modifier for saving throws they're not proficient in, which is just the relevant ability modifier.

Skills. For skills you have proficiency in, add your Proficiency Bonus to the ability modifier associated with that skill, and note the total. You might also wish to note the modifier for skills you're not proficient in, which is just the relevant ability modifier.

Passive Perception. Sometimes your GM will determine whether your character notices something without asking you to make a Wisdom (Perception) check; the GM uses your Passive Perception instead. Passive Perception is a score that reflects a general awareness of your surroundings when you're not actively looking for something. Use this formula to determine your Passive Perception score:

Passive Perception = 10 + Wisdom (Perception) check modifier

Include all modifiers that apply to your Wisdom (Perception) checks. For example, if your character has a Wisdom of 15 and proficiency in the Perception skill, you have a Passive Perception of 14 (10 + 2 for your Wisdom modifier + 2 for proficiency).

Hit Points. Your class and Constitution modifier determine your Hit Point maximum at level 1, as shown on the Level 1 Hit Points by Class table.

Level 1 Hit Points by Class

Class	Hit Point Maximum
Barbarian	12 + Con. modifier
Fighter, Paladin, or Ranger	10 + Con. modifier
Bard, Cleric, Druid, Monk, Rogue, or Warlock	8 + Con. modifier
Sorcerer or Wizard	6 + Con. modifier

The character sheet includes room to note your current Hit Points when you take damage, as well as any Temporary Hit Points you might gain. There's also space to track Death Saving Throws.

Hit Point Dice. Your class's description tells you the die type of your character's Hit Point Dice (or Hit Dice for short); write this on your character sheet. At level 1, your character has 1 Hit Die. You can spend Hit Dice during a Short Rest to recover Hit Points. Your character sheet also includes space to note how many Hit Dice you've spent.

Initiative. Write your Dexterity modifier in the space for Initiative on your character sheet.

Armor Class. Without armor or a shield, your base Armor Class is 10 plus your Dexterity modifier. If your starting equipment includes armor or a Shield (or both), calculate your AC using the rules in "Equipment." A class feature might give you a different way to calculate your AC.

Attacks. In the Weapons & Damage Cantrips section of the character sheet, write your starting weapons. The attack roll bonus for a weapon with which you have proficiency is one of the following unless a weapon's property says otherwise:

Melee attack bonus = Strength modifier + Proficiency Bonus

Ranged attack bonus = Dexterity modifier + Proficiency Bonus

Look up the damage and properties of your weapons in “Equipment.” You add the same ability modifier you use for attacks with a weapon to your damage rolls with that weapon.

Spellcasting. Note both the saving throw DC for your spells and the attack bonus for attacks you make with them, using these formulas:

Spell save DC = 8 + spellcasting ability modifier + Proficiency Bonus

Spell attack bonus = spellcasting ability modifier + Proficiency Bonus

Your spellcasting ability modifier for a spell is determined by whatever feature gives you the ability to cast the spell.

Spell Slots, Cantrips, and Prepared Spells. If your class gives you the Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature, your class features table shows the number of spell slots you have available, how many cantrips you know, and how many spells you can prepare. Choose your cantrips and prepared spells, and note them—along with your number of spell slots—on your character sheet.

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