Hit Points. An object's hit points measure how much damage it can take before losing its structural integrity. Resilient objects have more hit points than fragile ones. Large objects also tend to have more hit points than small ones, unless breaking a small part of the object is just as effective as breaking the whole thing. The Object Hit Points table provides suggested hit points for fragile and resilient objects that are Large or smaller.

Object Hit Points

Size	Fragile	Resilient
Tiny (bottle, lock)	2 (1d4)	5 (2d4)
Small (chest, lute)	3 (1d6)	10 (3d6)
Medium (barrel, chandelier)	4 (1d8)	18 (4d8)
Large (cart, 10-ft.-by-10-ft. window)	5 (1d10)	27 (5d10)

Huge and Gargantuan Objects. Normal weapons are of little use against many Huge and Gargantuan objects, such as a colossal statue, towering column of stone, or massive boulder. That said, one torch can burn a Huge tapestry, and an *earthquake* spell can reduce a colossus to rubble. You can track a Huge or Gargantuan object's hit points if you like, or you can simply decide how long the object can withstand whatever weapon or force is acting against it. If you track hit points for the object, divide it into Large or smaller sections, and track each section's hit points separately. Destroying one of those sections could ruin the entire object. For example, a Gargantuan statue of a human might topple over when one of its Large legs is reduced to 0 hit points.

Objects and Damage Types. Objects are immune to poison and psychic damage. You might decide that some damage types are more effective against a particular object or substance than others. For example, bludgeoning damage works well for smashing things but not for cutting through rope or leather. Paper or cloth objects might be vulnerable to fire and lightning damage. A pick can chip away stone but can't effectively cut down a tree. As always, use your best judgment.

Damage Threshold. Big objects such as castle walls often have extra resilience represented by a damage threshold. An object with a damage threshold has immunity to all damage unless it takes an amount of damage from a single attack or effect equal to or greater than its damage threshold, in which case it takes damage as normal. Any damage that fails to meet or exceed the object's damage threshold is considered superficial and doesn't reduce the object's hit points.

Combat

This section builds on the combat rules in the *Player's Handbook* and offers tips for keeping the game running smoothly when a fight breaks out.

Tracking Initiative

You can use several different methods for keeping track of who goes when in combat.

Hidden List

Many DMs keep track of initiative on a list the players can't see: usually a piece of paper behind a DM screen or a spreadsheet on a tablet computer. This method allows you to keep track of combatants who haven't been revealed yet, and you can use the initiative list as a place to record the current hit points of monsters, as well as other useful notes.

A downside of this approach is that you have to remind the players round after round when their turns come up.

Visible List

You can use a whiteboard to track initiative. As the players tell you their initiative numbers, write them on the whiteboard in order from highest to lowest, leaving space between each name. Either write the monsters' initiatives on the list at the same time or add them to the list on each monster's first turn.

As a further improvement, use magnets that you can attach to a metal-based whiteboard with characters' and monsters' names written on them, or write those names on cards held in place by magnets.

A visible list lets everyone see the order of play. Players know when their turns are coming up, and they can start planning their actions in advance. A visible list also removes any uncertainty about when the monsters will act in the fight.

A variation on the visible list is to give one player responsibility for keeping track of initiative, either on a whiteboard or on a piece of paper the other players can see. This method reduces the number of things you need to keep track of yourself.

Index Cards

In this approach, each character gets an index card, as does each group of identical monsters. When the players tell you their initiative numbers, write the numbers on their characters' index cards. Do the same when you roll the monsters' initiative. Then arrange the cards in order from highest to lowest. Starting at the top, you move down through the stack. When you call out the name of the character whose turn it is, also mention who's next, prompting that player to start thinking ahead. After each character or group of monsters acts, the top card is moved to the bottom of the stack.

At first, players don't know the order of play when you use combat cards, and they don't know where the monsters fall into the order until the monsters act.

Tracking Monster Hit Points

During a combat encounter, you need to track how much damage each monster takes. Most DMs track damage in secret so that their players don't know how many hit points a monster has remaining. Whether you choose to be secretive or not is up to you. What's important is that every monster's hit points be tracked individually.

Tracking damage for one or two monsters isn't onerous, but it helps to have a system for larger groups of monsters. If you aren't using miniatures or other visual aids, the easiest way to keep track of your monsters is to assign them unique features. Descriptions such as "the ogre with the nasty scar" and "the ogre with the horned helm" help you and your players track which monster is which. For example, imagine that you're running an encounter with three

ogres, each of which has 59 hit points. Once initiative is rolled, jot down each ogre's hit points and add notes (and even a name, if you like) to differentiate each one:

Krag (ogre w/ scar): 59
Thod (ogre w/ helm): 59
Mur (ogre who smells like poo): 59

If you use miniatures to represent monsters, one easy way to differentiate them is to give each one a unique miniature. If you use identical miniatures to represent multiple monsters, you can tag the miniatures with small stickers of different colors or stickers with different letters or numbers on them.

For example, in a combat encounter with three ogres, you could use three identical ogre miniatures tagged with stickers marked A, B, and C, respectively. To track the ogres' hit points, you can sort them by letter, then subtract damage from their hit points as they take it. Your records might look something like this after a few rounds of combat:

Ogre A: ~~59~~ ~~53~~ ~~45~~ ~~24~~ ~~14~~ 9 dead
Ogre B: ~~59~~ ~~51~~ 30
Ogre C: 59

Players often ask how hurt a monster looks. Don't ever feel as though you need to reveal exact hit points, but if a monster is below half its hit point maximum, it's fair to say that it has visible wounds and appears beaten down. You can describe a monster taken to half its hit points as bloodied, giving the players a sense of progress in a fight against a tough opponent, and helping them judge when to use their most powerful spells and abilities.

Using and Tracking Conditions

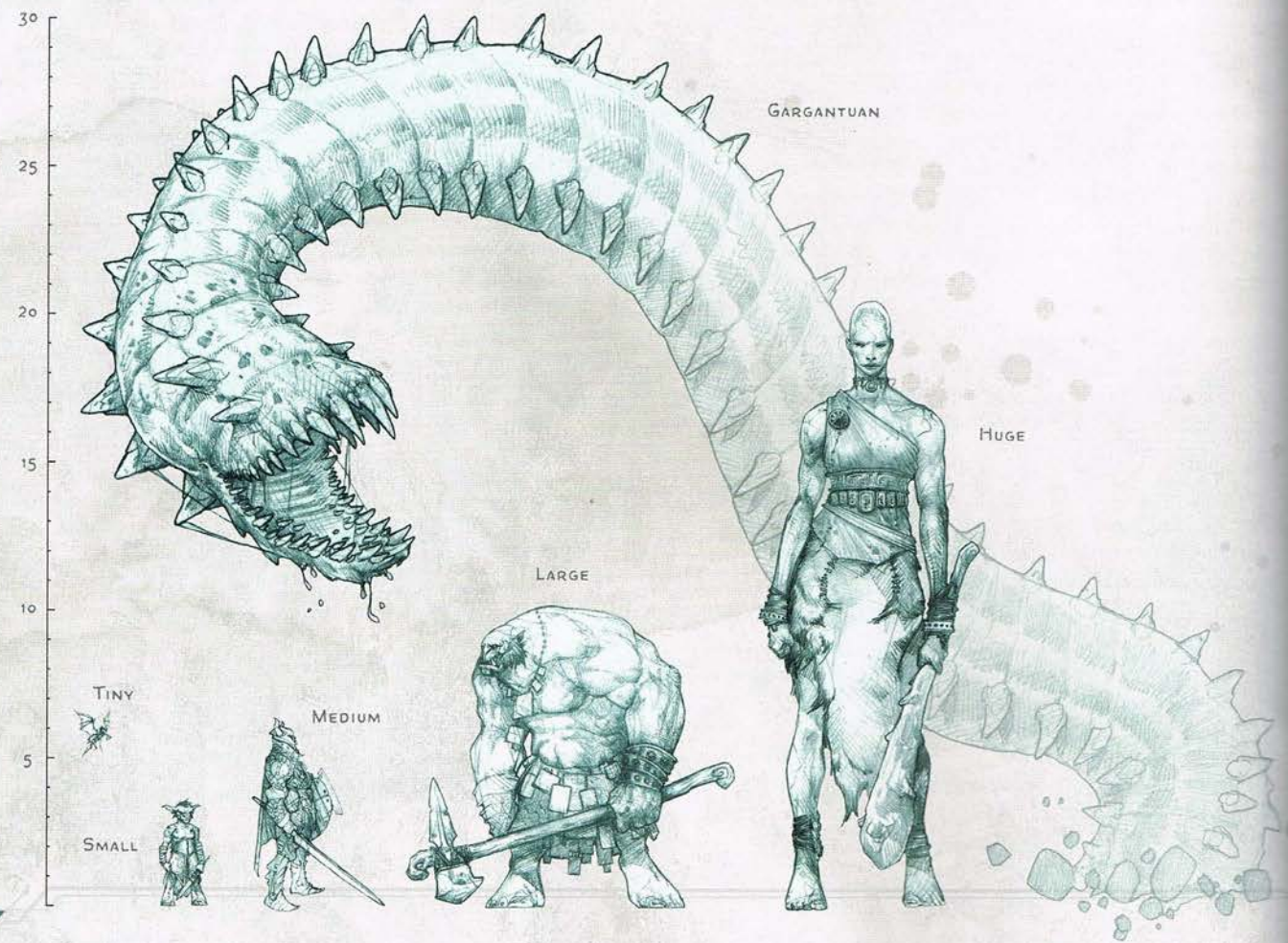
Various rules and features in the game are clear about when they apply a condition to a creature. You can also apply conditions on the fly. They're meant to be intuitive for you to do so. For example, if a character is in a state, such as sleep, that lacks consciousness, you can say the character is unconscious. Or did a character just stumble onto the ground? He or she is now prone.

Keeping track of conditions can become tricky. For monsters, it's often easiest to track conditions on combat cards or wherever you track initiative. Players should remember any conditions affecting their characters. Because players have incentive to forget or overlook hampering conditions, character conditions can also be marked on combat cards or a whiteboard.

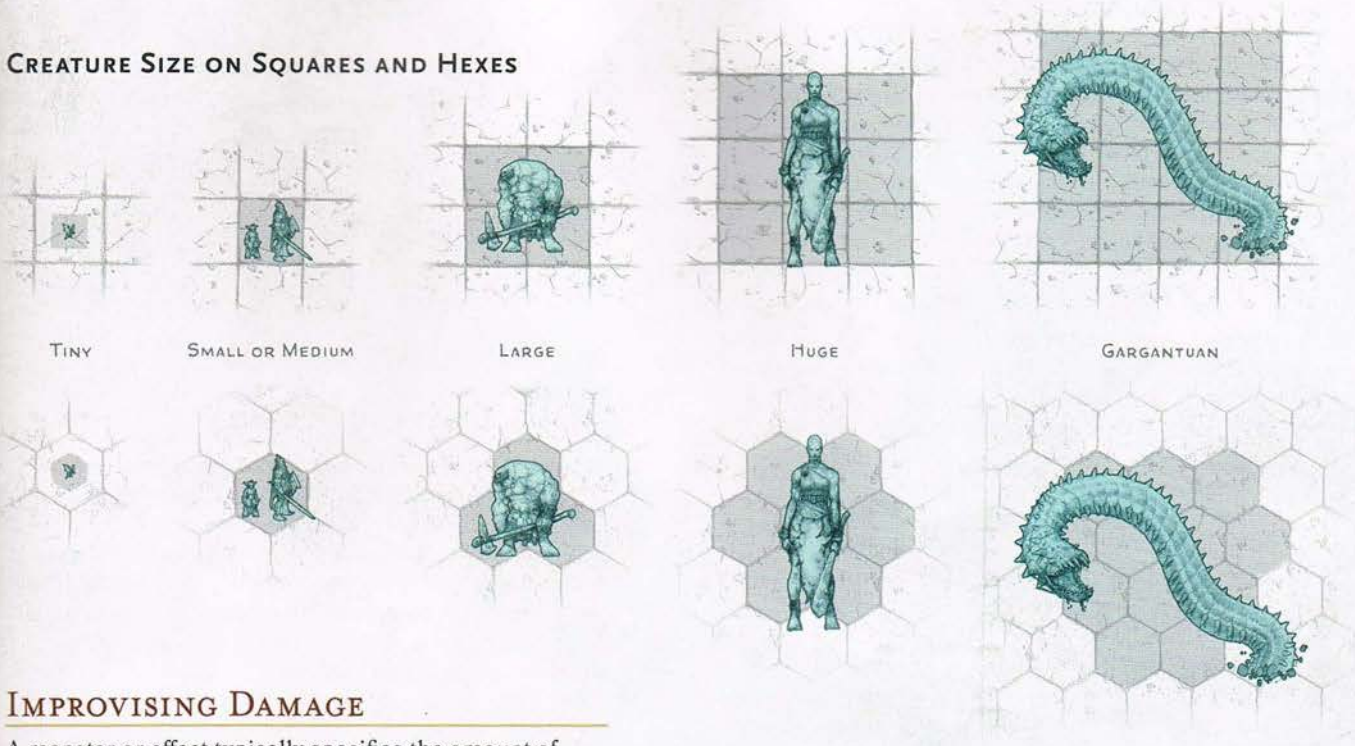
You might also try keeping a supply of index cards on hand, marked with conditions and their effects. Then hand the cards to players as the conditions come up. Having a bright pink index card on top of a character sheet can help even the most absentminded player remember the effects of being charmed or frightened.

Monsters and Critical Hits

A monster follows the same rule for critical hits as a player character. That said, if you use a monster's average damage, rather than rolling, you might wonder how to handle a critical hit. When the monster scores a critical hit, roll all the damage dice associated with the hit and add them to the average damage. For example, if a goblin normally deals 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage on a hit and scores a critical hit, it deals 5 + 1d6 slashing damage.



Creature Size on Squares and Hexes



Improvising Damage

A monster or effect typically specifies the amount of damage it deals. In some cases, though, you need to determine damage on the fly. The Improvising Damage table gives you suggestions for when you do so.

Improvising Damage

Dice	Examples
1d10	Burned by coals, hit by a falling bookcase, pricked by a poison needle
2d10	Being struck by lightning, stumbling into a fire pit
4d10	Hit by falling rubble in a collapsing tunnel, stumbling into a vat of acid
10d10	Crushed by compacting walls, hit by whirling steel blades, wading through a lava stream
18d10	Being submerged in lava, being hit by a crashing flying fortress
24d10	Tumbling into a vortex of fire on the Elemental Plane of Fire, being crushed in the jaws of a godlike creature or a moon-sized monster

The Damage Severity and Level table is a guide to how deadly these damage numbers are for characters of various levels. Cross-reference a character's level with the damage being dealt to gauge the severity of the damage.

Damage Severity and Level

Character Level	Setback	Dangerous	Deadly
1st–4th	1d10	2d10	4d10
5th–10th	2d10	4d10	10d10
11th–16th	4d10	10d10	18d10
17th–20th	10d10	18d10	24d10

Damage sufficient to cause a **setback** rarely poses a risk of death to characters of the level shown, but a severely weakened character might be laid low by this damage.

In contrast, **dangerous** damage values pose a significant threat to weaker characters and could potentially kill a character of the level shown if that character is missing many hit points.

As the name suggests, **deadly** damage is enough to drop a character of the level shown to 0 hit points. This level of damage can kill even powerful characters outright if they are already wounded.

Adjudicating Areas of Effect

Many spells and other game features create areas of effect, such as the cone and the sphere. If you're not using miniatures or another visual aid, it can sometimes be difficult to determine who's in an area of effect and who isn't. The easiest way to address such uncertainty is to go with your gut and make a call.

If you would like more guidance, consider using the Targets in Areas of Effect table. To use the table, imagine which combatants are near one another, and let the table guide you in determining the number of those combatants that are caught in an area of effect. Add or subtract targets based on how bunched up the potential targets are. Consider rolling 1d3 to determine the amount to add or subtract.

Targets in Areas of Effect

Area	Number of Targets
Cone	Size ÷ 10 (round up)
Cube or square	Size ÷ 5 (round up)
Cylinder	Radius ÷ 5 (round up)
Line	Length ÷ 30 (round up)
Sphere or circle	Radius ÷ 5 (round up)

For example, if a wizard directs *burning hands* (a 15-foot cone) at a nearby group of orcs, you could use the table and say that two orcs are targeted (15 ÷ 10 = 1.5, rounded up to 2). Similarly, a sorcerer could

launch a *lightning bolt* (100-foot line) at some ogres and hobgoblins, and you could use the table to say four of the monsters are targeted (100 ÷ 30 = 3.33, rounded up to 4).

This approach aims at simplicity instead of spatial precision. If you prefer more tactical nuance, consider using miniatures.

Handling Mobs

Keeping combat moving along at a brisk pace can be difficult when there are dozens of monsters involved in a battle. When handling a crowded battlefield, you can speed up play by forgoing attack rolls in favor of approximating the average number of hits a large group of monsters can inflict on a target.

Instead of rolling an attack roll, determine the minimum d20 roll a creature needs in order to hit a target by subtracting its attack bonus from the target's AC. You'll need to refer to the result throughout the battle, so it's best to write it down.

Look up the minimum d20 roll needed on the Mob Attacks table. The table shows you how many creatures that need that die roll or higher must attack a target in order for one of them to hit. If that many creatures attack the target, their combined efforts result in one of them hitting the target.

For example, eight orcs surround a fighter. The orcs' attack bonus is +5, and the fighter's AC is 19. The orcs need a 14 or higher to hit the fighter. According to the table, for every three orcs that attack the fighter, one of them hits. There are enough orcs for two groups of three. The remaining two orcs fail to hit the fighter.

If the attacking creatures deal different amounts of damage, assume that the creature that deals the most damage is the one that hits. If the creature that hits has multiple attacks with the same attack bonus, assume that it hits once with each of those attacks. If a creature's attacks have different attack bonuses, resolve each attack separately.

This attack resolution system ignores critical hits in favor of reducing the number of die rolls. As the number of combatants dwindles, switch back to using individual die rolls to avoid situations where one side can't possibly hit the other.

Mob Attacks

d20 Roll Needed	Attackers Needed for One to Hit
1–5	1
6–12	2
13–14	3
15–16	4
17–18	5
19	10
20	20

Using Miniatures

In combat, players can often rely on your descriptions to visualize where their characters are in relation to their surroundings and their enemies. Some complex battles, however, are easier to run with visual aids, the most common of which are miniatures and a grid. If you like to construct model terrain, build three-dimensional dungeons, or draw maps on large vinyl mats, you should also consider using miniatures.

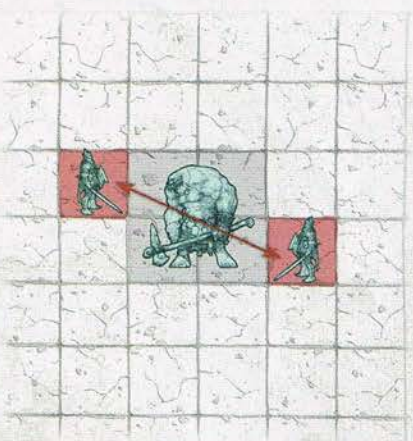
The *Player's Handbook* offers simple rules for depicting combat using miniature figures on a grid. This section expands on that material.

Tactical Maps

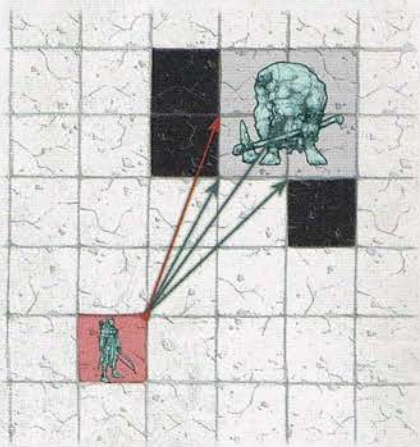
You can draw tactical maps with colored markers on a wet-erase vinyl mat with 1-inch squares, on a large sheet of paper, or on a similar flat surface. Preprinted poster-sized maps, maps assembled from cardboard tiles, and terrain made of sculpted plaster or resin are also fun.

The most common unit for tactical maps is the 5-foot square, and maps with grids are readily available and easy to create. However, you don't have to use a grid at all. You can track distances with a tape measure, string, craft sticks, or pipe cleaners cut to specific lengths. Another option is a play surface covered by 1-inch hexagons (often called hexes), which combines the easy counting of a grid with the more flexible movement of using no grid. Dungeon corridors with straight walls and right angles don't map easily onto hexes, though.

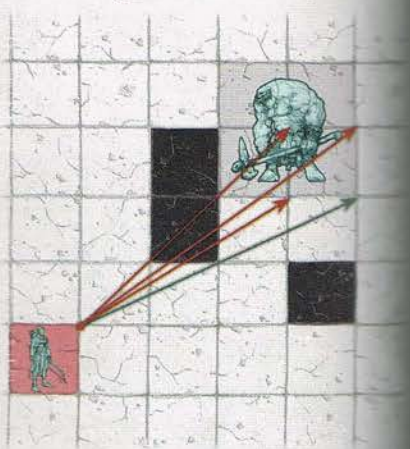
Flanking (Squares)



Half Cover (Squares)



Three-Quarters Cover (Squares)



Creature Size on Squares and Hexes

A creature's size determines how much space it occupies on squares or hexes, as shown in the Creature Size and Space table. If the miniature you use for a monster takes up an amount of space different from what's on the table, that's fine, but treat the monster as its official size for all other rules. For example, you might use a miniature that has a Large base to represent a Huge giant. That giant takes up less space on the battlefield than its size suggests, but it is still Huge for the purposes of rules like grappling.

Creature Size and Space

Size	Space: Squares	Space: Hexes
Tiny	4 per square	4 per hex
Small	1 square	1 hex
Medium	1 square	1 hex
Large	4 squares (2 by 2)	3 hexes
Huge	9 squares (3 by 3)	7 hexes
Gargantuan	16 squares (4 by 4) or more	12 hexes or more

Areas of Effect

The area of effect of a spell, monster ability, or other feature must be translated onto squares or hexes to determine which potential targets are in the area and which aren't.

Choose an intersection of squares or hexes as the point of origin of an area of effect, then follow its rules as normal. If an area of effect is circular and covers at least half a square, it affects that square.

Line of Sight

To precisely determine whether there is line of sight between two spaces, pick a corner of one space and trace an imaginary line from that corner to any part of another space. If at least one such line doesn't pass through or touch an object or effect that blocks vision—such as a stone wall, a thick curtain, or a dense cloud of fog—then there is line of sight.

Cover

To determine whether a target has cover against an attack or other effect on a grid, choose a corner of the attacker's space or the point of origin of an area of effect. Then trace imaginary lines from that corner to every corner of any one square the target occupies. If one or two of those lines are blocked by an obstacle (including another creature), the target has half cover. If three or four of those lines are blocked but the attack can still reach the target (such as when the target is behind an arrow slit), the target has three-quarters cover.

On hexes, use the same procedure as a grid, drawing lines between the corners of the hexagons. The target has half cover if up to three lines are blocked by an obstacle, and three-quarters cover if four or more lines are blocked but the attack can still reach the target.

Optional Rule: Flanking

If you regularly use miniatures, flanking gives combatants a simple way to gain advantage on attack rolls against a common enemy.

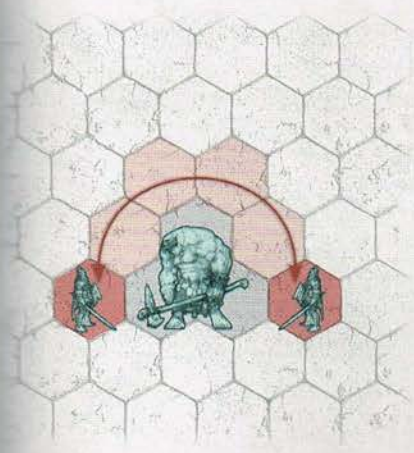
A creature can't flank an enemy that it can't see. A creature also can't flank while it is incapacitated. A Large or larger creature is flanking as long as at least one square or hex of its space qualifies for flanking.

Flanking on Squares. When a creature and at least one of its allies are adjacent to an enemy and on opposite sides or corners of the enemy's space, they flank that enemy, and each of them has advantage on melee attack rolls against that enemy.

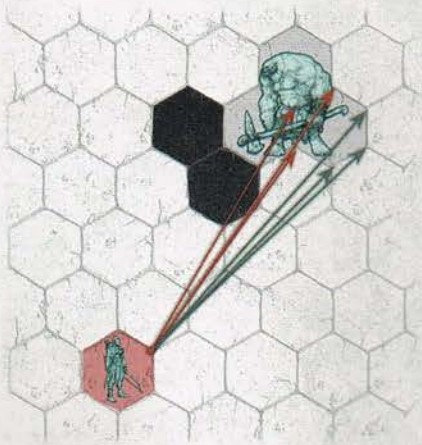
When in doubt about whether two creatures flank an enemy on a grid, trace an imaginary line between the centers of the creatures' spaces. If the line passes through opposite sides or corners of the enemy's space, the enemy is flanked.

Flanking on Hexes. When a creature and at least one of its allies are adjacent to an enemy and on opposite sides of the enemy's space, they flank that enemy, and each of them has advantage on attack rolls against that enemy. On hexes, count around the enemy from one creature to its ally. Against a Medium or smaller creature, the allies flank if there are 2 hexes between them. Against a Large creature, the allies flank if there are 4 hexes between them. Against a Huge creature, they must have 5 hexes between them. Against a Gargantuan creature, they must have at least 6 hexes between them.

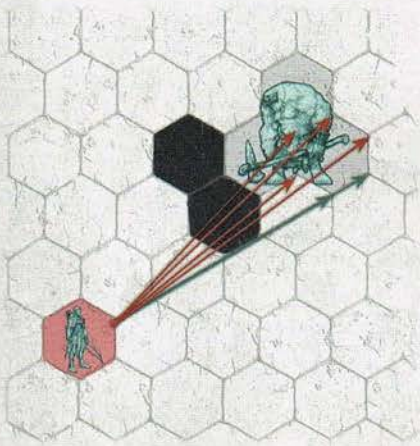
Flanking (Hexes)



Half Cover (Hexes)



Three-Quarters Cover (Hexes)



Optional Rule: Diagonals

The *Player's Handbook* presents a simple method for counting movement and measuring range on a grid: count every square as 5 feet, even if you're moving diagonally. Though this is fast in play, it breaks the laws of geometry and is inaccurate over long distances. This optional rule provides more realism, but it requires more effort during combat.

When measuring range or moving diagonally on a grid, the first diagonal square counts as 5 feet, but the second diagonal square counts as 10 feet. This pattern of 5 feet and then 10 feet continues whenever you're counting diagonally, even if you move horizontally or vertically between different bits of diagonal movement. For example, a character might move one square diagonally (5 feet), then three squares straight (15 feet), and then another square diagonally (10 feet) for a total movement of 30 feet.

Optional Rule: Facing

If you want the precision of knowing which way a creature is facing, consider using this optional rule.

Whenever a creature ends its move, it can change its facing. Each creature has a front arc (the direction it faces), left and right side arcs, and a rear arc. A creature can also change its facing as a reaction when any other creature moves.

A creature can normally target only creatures in its front or side arcs. It can't see into its rear arc. This means an attacker in the creature's rear arc makes attack rolls against it with advantage.

Shields apply their bonus to AC only against attacks from the front arc or the same side arc as the shield. For example, a fighter with a shield on the left arm can use it only against attacks from the front and left arcs.

Feel free to determine that not all creatures have every type of arc. For example, an amorphous ochre jelly could treat all of its arcs as front ones, while a hydra might have three front arcs and one rear one.

On squares, you pick one side of a creature's space as the direction it is facing. Draw a diagonal line outward from each corner of this side to determine the squares in its front arc. The opposite side of the space determines its rear arc in the same way. The remaining spaces to either side of the creature form its side arcs.

On hexes, determining the front, rear, and side arcs requires more judgment. Pick one side of the creature's space and create a wedge shape expanding out from there for the front arc, and another on the opposite side of the creature for the rear arc. The remaining spaces to either side of the creature are its side arcs.

A square or hex might be in more than one arc, depending on how you draw the lines from a creature's space. If more than half of a square or hex lies in one arc, it is in that arc. If it is split exactly down the middle, use this rule: if half of it lies in the front arc, it's in that arc. If half of it is in a side arc and the rear arc, it's in the side arc.

Adjudicating Reaction Timing

Typical combatants rely on the opportunity attack and the Ready action for most of their reactions in a fight. Various spells and features give a creature more reaction options, and sometimes the timing of a reaction can be difficult to adjudicate. Use this rule of thumb: follow whatever timing is specified in the reaction's description. For example, the opportunity attack and the *shield* spell are clear about the fact that they can interrupt their triggers. If a reaction has no timing specified, or the timing is unclear, the reaction occurs after its trigger finishes, as in the Ready action.

Chases

Strict application of the movement rules can turn a potentially exciting chase into a dull, predictable affair. Faster creatures always catch up to slower ones, while creatures with the same speed never close the distance between each other. This set of rules can make chases more exciting by introducing random elements.

Beginning a Chase

A chase requires a quarry and at least one pursuer. Any participants not already in initiative order must roll initiative. As in combat, each participant in the chase can take one action and move on its turn. The chase ends when one side drops out or the quarry escapes.

When a chase begins, determine the starting distance between the quarry and the pursuers. Track the distance between them, and designate the pursuer closest to the quarry as the lead. The lead pursuer might change from round to round.

Running the Chase

Participants in the chase are strongly motivated to use the Dash action every round. Pursuers who stop to cast spells and make attacks run the risk of losing their quarry, and a quarry that does so is likely to be caught.

Dashing

During the chase, a participant can freely use the Dash action a number of times equal to 3 + its Constitution modifier. Each additional Dash action it takes during the chase requires the creature to succeed on a DC 10 Constitution check at the end of its turn or gain one level of exhaustion.

A participant drops out of the chase if its exhaustion reaches level 5, since its speed becomes 0. A creature can remove the levels of exhaustion it gained during the chase by finishing a short or long rest.

Spells and Attacks

A chase participant can make attacks and cast spells against other creatures within range. Apply the normal rules for cover, terrain, and so on to the attacks and spells.

Chase participants can't normally make opportunity attacks against each other, since they are all assumed to be moving in the same direction at the same time.