

RESOLUTION AND CONSEQUENCES

You determine the consequences of attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. In most cases, doing so is straightforward. When an attack hits, it deals damage. When a creature fails a saving throw, the creature suffers a harmful effect. When an ability check equals or exceeds the DC, the check succeeds.

As a DM, you have a variety of flourishes and approaches you can take when adjudicating success and failure to make things a little less black-and-white.

SUCCESS AT A COST

Failure can be tough, but the agony is compounded when a character fails by the barest margin. When a character fails a roll by only 1 or 2, you can allow the character to succeed at the cost of a complication or hindrance. Such complications can run along any of the following lines:

- A character manages to get her sword past a hobgoblin's defenses and turn a near miss into a hit, but the hobgoblin twists its shield and disarms her.
- A character narrowly escapes the full brunt of a *fireball* but ends up prone.
- A character fails to intimidate a kobold prisoner, but the kobold reveals its secrets anyway while shrieking at the top of its lungs, alerting other nearby monsters.
- A character manages to finish an arduous climb to the top of a cliff despite slipping, only to realize that the rope on which his companions dangle below him is close to breaking.

When you introduce costs such as these, try to make them obstacles and setbacks that change the nature of the adventuring situation. In exchange for success, players must consider new ways of facing the challenge.

You can also use this technique when a character succeeds on a roll by hitting the DC exactly, complicating marginal success in interesting ways.

DEGREES OF FAILURE

Sometimes a failed ability check has different consequences depending on the degree of failure. For example, a character who fails to disarm a trapped chest might accidentally spring the trap if the check fails by 5 or more, whereas a lesser failure means that the trap wasn't triggered during the botched disarm attempt. Consider adding similar distinctions to other checks. Perhaps a failed Charisma (Persuasion) check means a queen won't help, whereas a failure of 5 or more means she throws you in the dungeon for your impudence.

CRITICAL SUCCESS OR FAILURE

Rolling a 20 or a 1 on an ability check or a saving throw doesn't normally have any special effect. However, you can choose to take such an exceptional roll into account when adjudicating the outcome. It's up to you to determine how this manifests in the game. An easy approach is to increase the impact of the success or failure. For example, rolling a 1 on a failed attempt to pick a lock might break the thieves' tools being used, and rolling a 20 on a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check might reveal an extra clue.

EXPLORATION

This section provides guidance for running exploration, especially travel, tracking, and visibility.

USING A MAP

Whatever environment the adventurers are exploring, you can use a map to follow their progress as you relate the details of their travels. In a dungeon, tracking movement on a map lets you describe the branching passages, doors, chambers, and other features the adventurers encounter as they go, and gives the players the opportunity to choose their own path. Similarly, a wilderness map can show roads, rivers, terrain, and other features that might guide the characters on their travels—or lead them astray.

The Map Travel Pace table helps you track travel on maps of different scales. The table shows how much distance on a map the adventurers can cover on foot in minutes, hours, or days. The table uses the travel paces—slow, normal, and fast—described in the *Player's Handbook*. Characters moving at a normal pace can walk about 24 miles in a day.

MAP TRAVEL PACE

Map Scale	Slow Pace	Normal Pace	Fast Pace
Dungeon (1 sq. = 10 ft.)	20 sq./min.	30 sq./min.	40 sq./min.
City (1 sq. = 100 ft.)	2 sq./min.	3 sq./min.	4 sq./min.
Province (1 hex = 1 mi.)	2 hexes/hr., 18 hexes/day	3 hexes/hr., 24 hexes/day	4 hexes/hr., 30 hexes/day
Kingdom (1 hex = 6 mi.)	1 hex/3 hr., 3 hexes/day	1 hex/2 hr., 4 hexes/day	1 hex/1½ hr., 5 hexes/day

SPECIAL TRAVEL PACE

The rules on travel pace in the *Player's Handbook* assume that a group of travelers adopts a pace that, over time, is unaffected by the individual members' walking speeds. The difference between walking speeds can be significant during combat, but during an overland journey, the difference vanishes as travelers pause to catch their breath, the faster ones wait for the slower ones, and one traveler's quickness is matched by another traveler's endurance.

A character bestride a phantom steed, soaring through the air on a *carpet of flying*, or riding a sailboat or a steam-powered gnomish contraption doesn't travel at a normal rate, since the magic, engine, or wind doesn't tire the way a creature does and the air doesn't contain the types of obstructions found on land. When a creature is traveling with a flying speed or with a speed granted by magic, an engine, or a natural force (such as wind or a water current), translate that speed into travel rates using the following rules:

- In 1 minute, you can move a number of feet equal to your speed times 10.
- In 1 hour, you can move a number of miles equal to your speed divided by 10.



- For daily travel, multiply your hourly rate of travel by the number of hours traveled (typically 8 hours).
- For a fast pace, increase the rate of travel by one-third.
- For a slow pace, multiply the rate by two-thirds.

For example, a character under the effect of a *wind walk* spell gains a flying speed of 300 feet. In 1 minute, the character can move 3,000 feet at a normal pace, 4,000 feet at a fast pace, or 2,000 feet at a slow pace. The character can also cover 20, 30, or 40 miles in an hour. The spell lasts for 8 hours, allowing the character to travel 160, 240, or 320 miles in a day.

Similarly, a *phantom steed* spell creates a magical mount with a speed of 100 feet that doesn't tire like a real horse. A character on a phantom steed can cover 1,000 feet in 1 minute at a normal pace, 1,333 feet at a fast pace, or 666 feet at a slow pace. In 1 hour, the character can travel 7, 10, or 13 miles.

VISIBILITY OUTDOORS

When traveling outdoors, characters can see about 2 miles in any direction on a clear day, or until the point where trees, hills, or other obstructions block their view.

Rain normally cuts maximum visibility down to 1 mile, and fog can cut it down to between 100 and 300 feet.

On a clear day, the characters can see 40 miles if they are atop a mountain or a tall hill, or are otherwise able to look down on the area around them from a height.

NOTICING OTHER CREATURES

While exploring, characters might encounter other creatures. An important question in such a situation is who notices whom.

Indoors, whether the sides can see one another usually depends on the configuration of rooms and passageways. Vision might also be limited by light sources. Outdoor visibility can be hampered by terrain, weather, and time of day. Creatures can be more likely to hear one another before they see anything.

If neither side is being stealthy, creatures automatically notice each other once they are within sight or hearing range of one another. Otherwise, compare the Dexterity (Stealth) check results of the creatures in the group that is hiding with the passive Wisdom (Perception) scores of the other group, as explained in the *Player's Handbook*.

TRACKING

Adventurers sometimes choose their path by following the tracks of other creatures—or other creatures might track the adventurers! To track, one or more creatures must succeed on a Wisdom (Survival) check. You might require trackers to make a new check in any of the following circumstances:

- They stop tracking and resume after finishing a short or long rest.
- The trail crosses an obstacle, such as a river, that shows no tracks.
- The weather conditions or terrain changes in a way that makes tracking harder.

The DC for the check depends on how well the ground shows signs of a creature's passage. No roll is necessary in situations where the tracks are obvious. For example, no check is needed to track an army advancing along a muddy road. Spotting tracks on a bare stone floor is more challenging, unless the creature being tracked leaves a distinct trail. Additionally, the passage of time often makes tracks harder to follow. In a situation where there is no trail to follow, you can rule that tracking is impossible.

The Tracking DCs table offers guidelines for setting the DC or, if you prefer, you can choose a DC based on your assessment of the difficulty. You can also grant advantage on the check if there's more than one set of tracks to follow, or disadvantage if the trail being followed passes through a well-trafficked area.

On a failed check, the character loses the trail but can attempt to find it again by making a careful search of the area. It takes 10 minutes to find a trail in a confined area such as a dungeon, or 1 hour outdoors.

TRACKING DCs

Ground Surface	DC
Soft surface such as snow	10
Dirt or grass	15
Bare stone	20
Each day since the creature passed	+5
Creature left a trail such as blood	-5

SOCIAL INTERACTION

During a social interaction, the adventurers usually have a goal. They want to extract information, secure aid, win someone's trust, escape punishment, avoid combat, negotiate a treaty, or achieve whatever other objective led to the interaction in the first place. The creatures they interact with also have agendas.

Some DMs prefer to run a social interaction as a free-form roleplaying exercise, where dice rarely come into play. Other DMs prefer to resolve the outcome of an interaction by having characters make Charisma checks. Either approach works, and most games fall somewhere in between, balancing player skill (roleplaying and persuading) with character skill (reflected by ability checks).

RESOLVING INTERACTIONS

The *Player's Handbook* provides guidelines for balancing roleplaying and ability checks in a social interaction (see chapter 8, "Adventuring," in that book). This section adds to that material by providing a structured way to resolve a social interaction. Much of this structure will be invisible to your players in play and isn't meant to be a substitute for roleplaying.

1. STARTING ATTITUDE

Choose the starting attitude of a creature the adventurers are interacting with: friendly, indifferent, or hostile.

A **friendly** creature wants to help the adventurers and wishes for them to succeed. For tasks or actions that require no particular risk, effort, or cost, friendly creatures usually help without question. If an element of personal risk is involved, a successful Charisma check might be required to convince a friendly creature to take that risk.

An **indifferent** creature might help or hinder the party, depending on what the creature sees as most beneficial. A creature's indifference doesn't necessarily make it standoffish or disinterested. Indifferent creatures might be polite and genial, surly and irritable, or anything in between. A successful Charisma check is necessary when the adventurers try to persuade an indifferent creature to do something.

A **hostile** creature opposes the adventurers and their goals but doesn't necessarily attack them on sight. For example, a condescending noble might wish to see a group of upstart adventurers fail so as to keep them from becoming rivals for the king's attention, thwarting them with slander and scheming rather than direct threats and violence. The adventurers need to succeed on one or more challenging Charisma checks to convince a hostile creature to do anything on their behalf. That said, a hostile creature might be so ill-disposed toward the party that no Charisma check can improve its attitude, in which case any attempt to sway it through diplomacy fails automatically.

2. CONVERSATION

Play out the conversation. Let the adventurers make their points, trying to frame their statements in terms that are meaningful to the creature they are interacting with.

Changing Attitude. The attitude of a creature might change over the course of a conversation. If the adventurers say or do the right things during an interaction (perhaps by touching on a creature's ideal, bond, or flaw), they can make a hostile creature temporarily indifferent, or make an indifferent creature temporarily friendly. Likewise, a gaffe, insult, or harmful deed might make a friendly creature temporarily indifferent or turn an indifferent creature hostile.

Whether the adventurers can shift a creature's attitude is up to you. You decide whether the adventurers have successfully couched their statements in terms that matter to the creature. Typically, a creature's attitude can't shift more than one step during a single interaction, whether temporarily or permanently.