

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS - 5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Summarised from *Players Handbook* & *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Wizards of the Coast, 2014 for Stromness Academy Library RPG Activities Groups.

### **COMBAT** (p189-198 PH)

1. Determine surprise
2. Establish positions
3. Roll initiative (turn order)
4. Take turns
5. Begin next round

**Surprise** (p189 PH)—Can't move or take action on your first turn. Can't take a reaction until your first turn ends. If character or creature doesn't notice a threat, they are surprised at the start of the encounter.

### **ACTIONS IN COMBAT** (p192-193 PH)

- **Attack**
- **Cast a spell**
- **Dash**—gain extra movement = your speed
- **Disengage**—movement doesn't provoke opportunity attack
- **Dodge**—Until start of next turn any attack against you has disadvantage
- **Help**—Lend aid to give advantage on next ability check creature takes before start of your next turn OR aid an attack by distracting target. If ally attacks before your next turn, first attack roll is made with advantage
- **Hide**—Make a DEX(Stealth) check (vs WIS(Perception) or passive WIS(Perception) if creature not actively searching). Can't hide from creature that can see you.
- **Ready**—To wait for a defined (by you) trigger before you act. 1 reaction per round. Take reaction immediately after trigger has happened or chose to ignore. Spells, to be readied, must have casting time of 1 action. Holding on to it requires concentration.
- **Search**—You try to find something. WIS(Perception) or INT(Investigation) check.
- **Use an Object**—You focus on interacting with an object or objects.
- **Climb onto a Bigger Creature** (p271 DMG)
- **Disarm** (p271 DMG)
- **Mark** (p271 DMG)
- **Overrun** (p272 DMG)
- **Shove Aside** (p272 DMG)
- **Tumble** (p272 DMG)

### **On your turn**

- **Move**—a distance up to your speed.
- **Take ONE action**
- **Bonus action**—if class feature, spell or other ability lets you (one per turn)

**Reaction**—instant response to a trigger occurring on your or someone else's turn. Can't take another until start of your next turn.

**Free action**—Briefly communicate to others; interact with one object (eg. open door, pull sword). Anything more complex will require an action.

**Two-weapon fighting** (p195 PH)—Holding light weapons in both hands (eg. shortsword and dagger), use attack action to attack with weapon in one hand, take a bonus action to attack with a different light weapon in off-hand. Don't add ability modifier unless it is negative. If weapon has thrown property you can use them.

**Grappling** (p195 PH)—To grab or wrestle. Target no more than one size larger than you. STR(Athletics) vs STR(Athletics) OR DEX(Acrobatcs). To escape—use action. Your STR(Athletics) vs STR(Athletics) OR DEX(Acrobatcs).

**Shoving** (p195 PH)—to knock prone or shove away from you. No more than one size larger. Use attack action. STR(Athletics) vs target's STR(Athletics) or DEX(Acrobatcs).

**Ranged attack in close combat** (p195 PH)—(Weapon or spell) Disadvantage on attack roll if within 5' of enemy who can see you or isn't incapacitated.

**Flanking** (optional rule) (p250 DMG)—When allies are adjacent and at opposite sides or corner of enemy Advantage on attack rolls. Enemies will also get this.

**Interact with objects around you** (p190 PH)—Can be taken as part of your movement or action. You can communicate with brief sentences or gestures. DM might require an action to be used if special care is needed or the task is more difficult than it first appears (see ‘Use an Object’ above).

- Draw / sheathe weapon
- Open / close door
- Remove a potion from backpack
- Turn a key
- Pick up a dropped weapon
- Remove a ring
- Eat food on the move
- Throw a lever or switch
- Pull a torch from sconce
- Kick a stone
- Hand item to another player
- Drink or give a potion
- Etc.

**Opportunity attack** (p195 PH)—moving out of an enemy’s reach (moving past or moving away from) can provoke an opportunity attack. Use reaction to make one melee attack. This interrupts provoking creature’s movement. Triggered by moving out of reach of creature. You don’t provoke opportunity attack if forced to move. Avoid taking opportunity attacks by using the Disengage action.

### **ADVANTAGE & DISADVANTAGE** (p7 & p173 PH)

Special ability, feature or spell will indicate whether you had advantage or disadvantage on an attack, ability or saving throw. Roll a second d20.

**Advantage**—use highest score

**Disadvantage**—use lowest score

### **COVER** (p196 PH)

**Half Cover**— +2 to AC and DEX saving throws. At least half body covered. (eg. low wall; large item of furniture; creature (whether ally or enemy))

**Three-quarters cover**— +5 to AC and DEX saving throws. (eg. portcullis; large tree trunk; arrow slit)

**Total cover**—Can’t be targeted by attack or spell (unless target is included in an area of effect)

**Hitting cover** (optional rule) (p272 DMG)—(Ranged attacks into combat) If attack would have hit target’s AC without cover, but missed with the cover, then the cover is hit. If the cover is a creature (enemy or ally) it will take damage.

### **DAMAGE** (p196 PH)

Weapon attack—add ability modifier. Some weapons (eg. finesse) or features may allow you to choose which modifier to use.

- **Melee** = STR
- **Ranged** (or Finesse weapons) = DEX
- **Spell** = The spell will tell you which dice to roll and which modifier to add (if any).  
Damage to more than one target—roll the damage once for all of them. (NB. Separate attack roll or spell save for each target.)

### **CRITICAL HIT** (p196 PH)

Natural 20—Roll all attack’s damage dice twice, then add relevant modifiers. If other damage dice involved (eg. Rogue’s sneak attack) roll them twice too.

### **CRITICAL FAIL**

Natural 1—Usually just a miss, but DM can decide whether something happens as a consequence, eg. a weapon breaks; disarmed; hit an ally

### **DAMAGE RESISTANCE & VULNERABILITY** (p197 PH)

**Resistance** to damage type—Damage is halved

**Vulnerability** to damage type—Damage is doubled

#### Damage Types

Acid  
Bludgeoning  
Cold  
Fire  
Force  
Lightning  
Necrotic  
Piercing  
Poison  
Psychic  
Radiant  
Slashing  
Thunder

## **INSPIRATION** (p 125 PH / p240 DMG)

The DM can award inspiration for your role-playing, particularly playing to your personality traits. You cannot stockpile inspiration points - you can only ever have one at a time.

Use the inspiration point to give you advantage on an attack, saving throw, or ability check roll. You can declare your use of inspiration after you make your initial roll. You can give your inspiration point to another player as well.

## **DEATH & DYING** (p197-198 PH)

**Fall unconscious**—Damage reduces you to 0 hp. Ends if you regain hit points (eg. from healing received). See ‘death saving’.

**Instant death**—Damage reduces you to 0 and remaining damage equals or exceeds total hp. You die!

**Death saving throws**—If you are unconscious make death saving throws.

- Roll d20. >10 you succeed. <10 you fail and slip closer to death.
- Three successes—you are stable but still unconscious. Hp reset to 0.
- Three failures—you die!
- Reset to zero—if you regain hp or are stabilised. Starts again if receive more damage.
- Roll 1—counts as two failures
- Roll 20—regain 1 hp

**Stabilising**—An ally can use an action to administer first aid. Succeed on a DC10 Wisdom(Medicine) check. Remain unconscious. If not healed stable creature regains 1 hp after 1d4 hours.

**Incapacitate**—If you want to knock a creature out reduce it to 0hp with a melee attack. Choice can be made when damage is dealt. Creature is unconscious and stable.

**Temporary Hit Points** (p198 PH)—Some spells and special abilities can give you temporary hp. These aren’t real hp and are used as a buffer against damage. They are separate from your hp total. When you take damage, use the temporary hp first. You cannot stack temporary hp. If you have some and receive more, choose which set to keep. Receiving temporary hp whilst unconscious will not stabilise or restore you to consciousness. They last until they are depleted or you have finished a long rest.

## **MOVEMENT** (p181-182, 190-192 PH)

Move up to your speed. Can include jumping, climbing and swimming.

### **Breaking up Your Move** (p190 PH)

- *Move between attacks*—eg. Move; attack; move (up to your speed).
- *Different speed*—eg. speed + fly speed which you can move between.

**Difficult terrain** (p182 PH)—Move half speed.

**Drop Prone** (p190 PH)—Without using any of your speed.

**Stand up**—costs half your speed. You can’t stand up if you don’t have enough movement left or speed is 0.

**Climb, Swim, Crawl** (p182 PH)—1 foot movement costs 1 extra foot unless you have a climb or swim speed. Climbing difficult surface or swimming in rough water may require a successful STR(Athletics) check.

**Jumping** (p182 PH)—Strength determines how far you can jump.

- **Long Jump**—Move at least 10' on foot immediately before jump. Cover up to your Strength score.
  - Standing jump—cover half that distance
  - Low obstacle—No taller than ¼ jump's distance. STR(Athletics) check to clear it
  - Landing in difficult terrain—DEX(Acrobatcs) check to land on feet, otherwise land prone.
- **High jump**—Leap into air 3+STR modifier if move at least 10'. If extend arms above head, distance = height of jump +1 ½ times your height.
  - Standing high jump—cover half that distance
  - To jump higher than normal—STR(Athletics)

**VISION & LIGHT** (p183-184 PH)—Some races and creatures have different abilities to see things.

**Blindsight**—Does not use sight to perceive its surroundings. Other senses are heightened or they can use echolocation.

**Darkvision**—Can see in darkness up to a specified range as though it was dim light thus areas of darkness are dimly obscured. Cannot see in colour, only in greys.

**Truesight**—Able to see in normal and magical darkness. Can see invisible creatures. Can detect visual illusions. Can see natural form of shapechangers or those changed by magic. Can see into the Ethereal Plane.

**Lightly obscured**—eg. patchy fog, foliage. Disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight.

**Heavily obscured**—eg. dense fog or foliage. Blocks vision. Blinded condition.

**Bright light**—eg. daylight or torches, lanterns, etc. (up to specified radius).

**Dim light**—eg. shadowed areas, twilight & dawn, bright moonlight. Wisdom(Perception checks made with disadvantage.

**Darkness**—eg. any unlit area or magical darkness. Heavily obscured.

**Travel Pace** (p182 PH)

Pace	Minute	Hour	Day	Effect
Fast	400'	4 miles	30 miles	-5 to passive Wisdom(Perception) scores
Normal	300'	3 miles	24 miles	--
Slow	200'	2 miles	18 miles	Able to use stealth

**LIFTING & CARRYING** (p176 PH)

**Carrying capacity**—Strength score x 15

**Push, drag, or lift**—2 x carrying capacity (30 x Str score); Speed drops to 5'

**Encumbrance** (Optional rule) (p176 PH)

Encumbered = 5 x Str score; Speed drops by 20'

Heavily encumbered = 10 x Str score; Speed drops by 20'; Disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws that use STR, Dex, Con.

## CONDITIONS (p290-292 PH)

**Blinded**—Can't see; auto fail ability checks requiring sight; Attacks against have advantage; Attacks made have disadvantage.

**Charmed**—Can't attack or target the charmer; Charmer has advantage on ability checks to interact socially.

**Deafened**—Can't hear; Auto fails ability checks that require hearing.

**Frightened**—Disadvantage on ability checks and attacks whilst source is in line of sight; Can't move closer to source of fear.

**Grappled**—Speed = 0; Can't benefit from any bonus to speed; Ends if grappler incapacitated or if effect moves grappled creature out of reach from grappler.

**Incapacitated**—Can't take actions or reactions.

**Invisible**—Can't be seen without aid of magic or a special sense; Creature is heavily obscured; Can be detected by any noise it makes or tracks left; Attacks against have disadvantage; Attacks creature makes has advantage.

**Paralysed**—Incapacitated; Can't move or speak; Auto fail Str and Dex saving throws; Attacks have advantage against; Attack from within 5' that hit is an auto critical hit.

**Petrified**—Turned to stone (or other solid inanimate substance), inc. held non-magical objects; Weight = x10; Ceases aging; Can't move, speak and is unaware of surroundings; Attack against has advantage; Auto fail Str and Dex saving throws; Resistance to all damage; Immune to poison and disease (unless already in system, then it is suspended).

**Poisoned**—Disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

**Prone**—Movement = crawl, unless stand up; Disadvantage on attacks; Attacks against have advantage if within 5' otherwise disadvantage.

**Restrained**—Speed = 0; Can't benefit from any bonus to speed; Attacks against have advantage; Attacks made have disadvantage; Disadvantage on Dex saving throws.

**Stunned**—Incapacitated; Can't move; Speak falteringly; Auto fail Str and Dex saving throws; Attacks against have advantage.

**Unconscious**—Incapacitated; Can't move or speak; Unaware of surroundings; Drops whatever holding and falls prone; Auto fail Str and Dex saving throws; Attacks against have advantage; Attack from within 5' that hit is an auto critical hit.

## ABILITY CHECKS (p174-178 PH & p237 DMG)

- **Strength**—Physical force & athleticism - Athletics
- **Dexterity**—Agility, reflexes & balance - Acrobatics; Sleight of Hand; Stealth
- **Constitution**—Stamina & health
- **Intelligence**—Memory & reason - Arcana; History; Investigation; Nature; Religion
- **Wisdom**—Perceptiveness, intuition & willpower - Animal Handling; Insight; Medicine; Perception; Survival
- **Charisma**—Social influence & confidence - Deception; Intimidation; Performance; Persuasion

**Difficulty Class (DC)**—the target an ability check, skill check or saving throw has to meet. The DM sets these. You will not be told these but common ones used are:

Very easy	= DC 5
Easy	= DC 10
Medium	= DC 15
Hard	= DC 20
Very hard	= DC 25
Nearly impossible	= DC30

## **SPELLCASTING** (p201-205 PH)

Spellcasters either know their spells or have to prepare spells. One known spell can be replaced when level up. Prepared spells can be changed at the end of a long rest. Each class has a list of spells (p207-11 PH).

- **Bard** (p52 PH)—Known; CHA; Spellcasting focus = musical instrument (p154 PH)
- **Cleric** (p58 PH)—Prepared; WIS; Spellcasting focus = Holy symbol (p150, 151 PH)
- **Druid** (p66 PH)—Prepared; WIS; Spellcasting focus = Druidic focus (p150, 151 PH)
- **Paladin** (p84 PH)—@Lvl 2; Prepared; WIS; Spellcasting focus = Holy Symbol
- **Ranger** (p91 PH)—@Lvl 2; Known; WIS
- **Rogue** (Arcane Trickster) (p98 PH)—Lvl 3; Known; INT
- **Sorcerer** (p101 PH)—Known; CHA; Spellcasting focus = Arcane focus (p150, 151 PH)
- **Warlock** (p107 PH)—Known; CHA; Spellcasting focus = Arcane focus
- **Wizard** (p114 PH)—Prepared - from spellbook (p114 PH); INT; Spellcasting focus = Arcane focus; Learn two new spells, add to spellbook each level up; If you find a new spell whilst adventuring, you can copy it to your spellbook. It takes 2hrs and costs 50gp.

**Spell save DC** = 8+ proficiency bonus + relevant ability modifier

**Spell Attack** = proficiency bonus + relevant ability modifier

**Spell slots** (p201 PH)—Cast limited number of spells using spell slots. Can cast lower level spells in higher level slots, but not the other way round (eg. 5<sup>th</sup> lvl can't be used in 3<sup>rd</sup> lvl slot). Read spell description for casting at higher levels. Slots are restored at end of long rest.

**Cantrips** (p201 PH)—Spells which can be cast at will.

**Rituals** (p201 PH)—Spells with ritual tag can be cast as a ritual. Takes 10 minutes longer to cast, but doesn't use spell slot. Spellcaster needs to have the ability to use rituals - Bard; Cleric; Druid; Wizard.

**Casting Time** (p203 PH)—Most spells use one Action. Some spells have specific requirements:

- **Bonus Action**—Quick spell. Use bonus action on your turn. If you cast a bonus spell in your turn, you can't cast another spell, unless it is a cantrip with casting time of 1 action.
- **Reaction**—Cast in response to an event / trigger.
- **Longer casting**—eg. Rituals; Will need action spent each turn for as long as the casting time states; Requires concentration.

**Components** (p203 PH)—The physical requirements for casting the spell.

- **Verbal (V)**—Chanting or saying 'mystic' words.
- **Somatic (S)**—A gesture or set of gestures; The caster must have at least one free hand.
- **Material (M)**—An object (eg. Orb) or item is required; Stored in a component pouch; Can be reused unless spell states it is consumed; Caster needs free hand to access the components. A Spellcasting focus can be used in place of components, unless the spell shows a component cost.

**Duration** (p203 PH)—The length of time a spell persists - rounds, minutes, hours, etc).

- **Instantaneous**—exactly what it says!
- **Concentration**—Need to maintain concentration for specified amount of time; You can end concentration at any time (no action), thus ending the spell; Moving or attacking doesn't interfere; Broken if you cast another spell, take damage - CON saving throw = DC10 or half the damage (whichever is higher). If you take multiple sources of damage - separate CON save needed for each source. If you are incapacitated or die, or other environmental factor as decided by DM—CON saving throw = DC10.

**Targeting** (p204 PH)—Target can be a creature, object, or a point of origin depending on the spell. Pick one or more targets; Some spells may be unnoticed by target; Need a clear path therefore not behind total cover; Area of effect (p204 PH), if used, origin would be on near side of an obstruction; If you can choose target of choice or are in an area of effect, you can target yourself.

**Range** (p201 PH)—Target needs to be within spell range.

**MAGIC ITEMS** (p135-141 DMG)—Magic items are rare and are not usually available for purchase although lower level potions of healing, for instance, are more common. Magic items include: armour; potions; rings; rods; scrolls; staves; wands; weapons; wondrous items (eg. clothing, jewellery, etc). Some magic items are consumable which means they are used up once activated (eg. scrolls, some wands).

**To determine whether an item is magic or not** (p136 DMG)—There may be clues on the item. Use one or a combination of the following, depending on rarity of item, to work out what it does. These won't reveal if an item is cursed or not.

1. If a potion, a little taste or smell may tell you what it does.
2. Use a short rest to focus on the item whilst being in physical contact with it.
3. Wear or experiment with an item & above.
4. Use '*identify*' spell (which will also indicate if an item has set number of charges).

You will subsequently need to attune to the item once you have identified its properties.

**Attunement** (p136-137 DMG)—Some items require you to bond to them before you can use them. Others may also have a prerequisite - eg. particular class, be a spellcaster. To attune to a magic item, use a short rest:

- Focus on item whilst in physical contact with (holding or wearing) it - meditation.
- If it is a weapon - weapon practise.

An interruption means attunement fails. At end of short rest you know how to activate and use it.

Attunement will also determine how many charges and item might have.

Only one creature can be attuned to an item at a time. You can only be attuned to up to three items.

You can only attune to one copy of an item. Attunement ends when:

- Voluntarily - You spend short rest focussing on it (unless it is a cursed item (p 138 DMG)).
- You are more than 100' away from it for at least 24 hours.
- If an item is cursed a *remove curse* spell cast on the item will then enable you to end attunement.

**Scrolls** (p139 DMG)—You can attempt to use a scroll if you understand the language the arcane script is written in. Once used the words fade or the scroll crumbles to dust. Spell scrolls can only be activated if the spell is on the caster's spell list (p200 DMG).

## OTHER USEFUL / FURTHER INFORMATION FROM THE PH & DMG GUIDE

**Armour Table** (p145 PH)  
**Adventuring Gear** (p150 PH)  
**Chases** (pp252-256 DMG)  
**Coinage** (p143 PH)  
**Container Capacity** (p153 PH)  
**Difficulty Class** (p238 DMG)  
**Disease** (p256-257 DMG)  
**Exhaustion** (p291 DMG)  
**Food, Drink & Lodging** (p158 PH)  
**Group Checks** (p175 PH)  
**Improvised Damage** (eg. burned; struck by lightning) (p249 DMG)  
**Injuries** (p272 DMG)  
**Levelling Up** (p15 PH & see class information)  
**Massive Damage** (p273 DMG)  
**Mounts & Vehicles** (p157 PH)  
**Multiple ability checks** (p237 DMG)  
**Objects** (Armour class) (p246 DMG)  
**Passive Checks** (p175 PH)  
**Poison** (p257-258 DMG)  
**Proficiency** (p239 DMG)  
**Saving Throws** (p 179 PH & p238 DMG)  
**Social Interaction** (Conversation reaction) (p245 DMG)  
**Suffocating** (p183 PH)  
**Tools** (p154 PH)  
**Tracking** (p244 DMG)  
**Weapon Table** (p149 PH)  
**Spells - Areas of Effect** (p204 PH)

### Abbreviations

AC—Armour Class	Lvl—Level	PH—Player’s Handbook
CHA—Charisma	DM—Dungeon Master	Sp—Speed
CON—Constitution	DMG—Dungeon Master’s	S/throw - Saving throw
DC—Difficulty Class	Guide	STR—Strength
DEX—Dexterity	MM—Monster Manual	WIS—Wisdom
hp—Hit Points	NPC—Non-player character	
INT—Intelligence	PC—Player Character	

### Useful Links

#### *Official Links*

Dungeons & Dragons: Official page (Wizards of the Coast) - <http://dnd.wizards.com/>  
DnDBeyond (Online resources and toolset, character building, etc) - [www.dndbeyond.com/](http://www.dndbeyond.com/)  
Dungeon Master’s Guild - [www.dmsguild.com/](http://www.dmsguild.com/)

#### *Online D&D Virtual tabletops (vtt)*

Roll20 - <https://roll20.net/>  
Fantasy Grounds - [www.fantasygrounds.com](http://www.fantasygrounds.com)

Information summarised by F. Sinclair (for Stromness Academy D & D Group and private group) from:  
*Player’s Handbook* (Dungeons & Dragons). (2014). Wizards of the Coast  
*Dungeon Master’s Guide* (Dungeons & Dragons). (2014). Wizards of the Coast