

Meyerhawk®

Core Rules First Look

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Resolution Mechanics

The core mechanics needs to be both simple, comprehensive and deliver interesting varied and reliable results for a variety of tasks. The D&D5E is a good set of base mechanics that I've only altered slightly to better suit my needs. The result is a core mechanics that I will put to use in my games to see what needs to be tweaked even more.

The twenty-sided die (d20) is the core of my house rules action resolution mechanic. To make an attack, ability check, or saving throw, roll a d20 and add their relevant modifiers. Apply any bonuses and penalties, and compare the total to the appropriate difficulty rating (Armor Class, Difficulty Class etc.). If the total equals or exceeds the rating, the roll is a success. Otherwise, it's a failure.

The d20 roll represents the randomness in the resolution mechanics. In situations where a character lacks proficiency and are not very talented (low ability modifier) randomness of the die roll will almost totally dictate the outcome, and it will be almost impossible to overcome DC's higher than 20. In the case of a high level and skilled character aided by magic and a advantageous situation, randomness of the dice are not even half of the outcome and results can theoretically reach as high as 50.

d20 + ability modifier + proficiency bonus + specialty bonus + magic bonus + conditional (adv - dis)

Modifiers

Ability Modifiers

Ability depicts a characters aptitude to succeed at different tasks. Ability scores doesn't go up automatically as a character progress, ability scores can be increased by spending XP giving a sporadic increase during a characters career.

Abilities provide the base modifiers to almost all checks and gives the player the power to determine what a characters should be good at. Ability modifiers works in two ways, as a modifier in challenge resolutions and as a way to influence how difficult it is to learn things and in a few cases as a direct prerequisite.

Score	Modifier
1	-5
2-3	-4
4-5	-3
6-7	-2
8-9	-1

Score	Modifier
10-11	+0
12-13	+1
14-15	+2
16-17	+3
18-19	+4
20-21	+5
22-23	+6
24-25	+7
26-27	+8
28-29	+9
30	+10

Abilities below 8 and above 20 are beyond most characters, keeping the ability modifiers in most cases between -1 to +5 and at most -5 to +10.

Proficiency Bonus

Proficiency reflects a characters general ability to handle tasks they are proficient in. Proficiency Bonus increases automatically as the character levels up.

Level	Prof Bonus
0 - 2	0
3 - 5	1
6 - 8	2
9 - 11	3
12 - 14	4
15 - 17	5
18 - 20	6

I've used a full spread from 0 to +6 in the way I implement Proficiency Bonus rather than +2 to +6. This more gradual approach starting from 0 is to provide rules for low level play with characters that are mere commoners to high level play where a character can challenge even the mightiest creatures in the world. Proficiency during low level play is more about being able to do something rather than being good at it.

Specialty Bonus

Characters can specialize in skills (and other things like weapon usage) they are proficient in. Specialization can add up to +4 to a d20 roll. Specialty is also way to give to give your character an edge at something, even at low level play.

Weapon specialties adds the bonus to damage instead of the chance to hit. This is to keep the To Hit and AC numbers in balance and not inflating more than necessary. Weapon Proficiency has a master level as well that gives the wielder a special weapon property they can use, instead of more damage or higher to hit bonus. More on this in a future blog post.

Proficiency and Specialty can together add up to +10 to a check, the same amount as an average d20 roll. The 60-40 weight towards Proficiency is a way to insure that overall experience is a bit more valuable that specific expertise. I've also decided to use a fixed number rather than a die to keep the number crunching to a minimum during action filled moments of the game, and also to guarantee a plus on every roll and keep the randomness to the d20.

Magic

Magical modifiers from spells, enchanted weapons etc. can add up to +5 to a roll. Multiple magical bonuses doesn't stack, only the highest apply. Keeping magic restricted to +5 makes it as powerful as having a really high Ability Score and bit less than an expert at something.

Conditional: Advantage - Disadvantage

Position, lighting, stress or a myriad of other things can affect the outcome of a task. Circumstances can give a character advantage or disadvantage on a roll.

Using the 5E Advantage - Disadvantage mechanic for conditional modifiers helps the game in two ways, first it keeps the math calculations needed to a minimum during play. All the other modifiers are more static in nature, they change only now and then, recalculated and recorded on the character sheet. By using the ADV- DIS mechanics, no additional calculations are needed during play. The other bonus is that using ADV - DIS keeps the results within the same range, less number inflation.

For a more gritty version of the game have Advantage and Disadvantage stack for double or even triple, meaning rolling two or three dice and take the lowest or highest respectively.

Difficulty Class

DC is the numerical threshold that must be met or exceed on a d20 roll to succeed at an action or resist a spell or effect. DC is determined by the DM based on the complexity or danger of the task or effect. Taking all the modifiers into account, a roll including all possible modifiers can result in anything from -4 to 45 (or 50 using the Crit rule).

The table below lists common DC's from 5 to 40.

DC	Difficulty
DC 5	Trivial
DC 10	Easy
DC 15	Medium
DC 20	Challenging
DC 25	Hard
DC 30	Very Hard
DC 35	Formidable
DC 40	Impossible

Crits and Fumbles

Checks made under duress, like attack rolls, saves etc. can result in a critical success on a natural roll of 20 or a fumble on a natural roll of 1. DC's that are lower than your combined modifiers are a auto success if you are not at a Disadvantage and the fumble rules doesn't apply.

A natural 20 roll can be seen as an accomplishment enough to succeed against a DC 5 higher than otherwise possible in situations when Crits apply, like attacks for example.

Character Creation

The GM determines your starting XP budget, which are 2,500 XP for a 1st level character, but can be anything from 0 XP for a tough 0 level game, or way more for a higher level game.

Level, XP, Proficiency, HD, Exertion Table

Level	Prof Bonus	HD	Exertion	XP
0	0	Base HP	2	0
1	0	1	2	2 500
2	0	2	3	3 000
3	1	3	3	3 500
4	1	4	4	4 000
5	1	5	4	4 500
6	2	6	5	5 000
7	2	7	5	5 500
8	2	8	6	6 000
9	3	9	6	6 500
10	3	10	7	7 000
11	3	11	7	7 500
12	4	12	8	8 000
13	4	13	8	8 500
14	4	14	9	9 000
15	5	15	9	9 500
16	5	16	10	10 000
17	5	17	10	10 500
18	6	18	11	11 000
19	6	19	11	11 500
20	6	20	12	12 000

Default Features

The features that every character knows or have from the start without having to spend XP.

Abilities

The abilities your character starts with 60 ability points to allocate. Distribute them among the characters **Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma** with a maximum on 14 and a minimum of 6 in any of them. Remember that these numbers are going to be added to, both during character creation and during play. Remember to take Ancestry into account when allocating ability points.

Ability Increase (1)	XP	Learning Roll
Ability Increase	200	DC 5 + Target Ability Score

Ability increases made using XP during character creation doesn't require a learning roll, just the expenditure of XP.

Hit Dice

A characters Hit Dice determines how many hit points it gains each time it levels up. Characters start with a d6 Hit Die which can be upgraded to d8, d10 or a d12, either during character creation (by spending XP but no Learning Roll needed), or later (by spending XP and making a Learning Roll).

Unless you upgraded it your characters Hit Dice is d6, but until you leveled up to 1st Level you have 0 actual Hit Dice. A 0 level character has to rely on its (Constitution modified) Base Hit Points (see below).

Hit Die Increase (3)	XP	Learning Roll
Hit Dice d10	150	Constitution DC 15
Hit Dice d12	150	Constitution DC 20
Hit Dice d8	150	Constitution DC 10

Exertion Pool

Adventuring and facing danger requires willpower, whether borne from discipline, survival instinct, or bloodlust, to control the ebb and flow of action and combat around them. Every call to act beyond a typical block or strike depletes the stamina of a character.

To use certain actions, you must expend exertion points. **You start with 2 Exertion Points.** You regain any spent Exertion Points at the end of a Full Rest.

Ancestries

Depending on the campaign the GM will allow different Ancestries for your character.

Lifespan

The average Lifespan of each ancestry is used to calculate a characters natural length of life. For example, humans base lifespan is $60+3d20$ and make a roll to determine the length of your characters natural life. This value will be adjusted (down or up) due to illness, curses, magic, blessings and other factors during the character's life.

Ability Adjustments

Your ancestry affects your abilities, different ancestries might give you increases or decreases in your ability scores. Elven Ancestry for example gives you Intelligence +1, Dexterity +1 and Strength -1.

Base Hit Points

Your character gains a few base Hit Points based on its size plus its Constitution modifier at the start of its career.

Size	Hit Points
Tiny	6
Small	8
Medium	10
Large	12
Huge	20
Colossal	100

Base Hit Points determined by size reflects the basic physique of your character and gives a boost to low level play. This is to somewhat compensate for low level characters weaker Proficiency Bonus (compared to standard 5E). First level human (and other medium sized) characters with a decent Constitution will have at least 16 Hit Points (10 HP from size and a d6 hit die)

A one time boost at the start of a characters career means a lot for low level play without much impacting or unbalancing high level play.

Traits

Traits are things that you can sense, do, avoid, understand or resist because who you are, or what happens to you, and not so much what you have actively learned. Almost any type of capability might be a trait that your character have the ability to do.

Your ancestry gives you access to certain Traits, some which are default and others are additional. Default Traits doesn't incur an XP cost or require a Learning Roll, additional Traits require you to spend XP but no Learning is needed.

Traits that are not listed as default of additional for your Ancestry can become available to your character during play due to experience, magic, divine intervention or other fantastic events. Spending time on another plane or using an artifact for some time might give you special traits. These traits might need XP to be spent and/or a Learning Roll needed, or the trait might just become part of what your character can do.

Culture

The culture your character comes from might provides additional, abilities, feats or proficiencies. These features requires you to spend XP but no Learning needed. Culture also determines the starting social standing and wealth level of the character.

Proficiencies: Simple Weapons

Your character are proficient in the use of all simple weapons.

The simple weapons are: Club, Dagger, Great Club, Mace, Quarterstaff, Sickle, Sling and Spear.

The simple weapons proficiency reflect the fact that creatures like humans (and other similar creatures covered under Ancestries) will have a natural understanding and knack for using these simple weapons that are either cheap or more like versions of farming implements and basic tools, than refined instruments of war.



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