WELCOME TO

LEARN TO SLAY

How to play Dungeons & Dragons for beginning adventurers

THE ROOK ROOM

Tony Tandeski
Favorite Class: Druid

Annelise Tarnowski
Favorite Class: Wizard

OVERVIEW

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Quick Review

In Our Previous Sessions...

- We created our characters

- We rolled ability scores

- We conquered the Heroes Guild trials

Before we move on to our next lesson, did we have any questions that came up?

Combat

Playing in Rounds

Combat in D&D almost always takes place over what are considered rounds.

Each round in the game represents about 6 seconds in the game world.

During each round, each participant in the combat will have a turn – their chance to use an available action.

Sometimes there's a bonus surprise round at the beginning of combat determined by your DM.

Initiative

So, how do you know who goes in what order? That's called initiative!

The DM will likely ask everyone in the party to roll for initiative. You will roll your d20 and tell the DM what you rolled.

Other creatures in combat, usually controlled by the DM, will also have initiative.

Example: You come across a dire wolf. It has an initiative of 12. Do you go first or does the wolf?
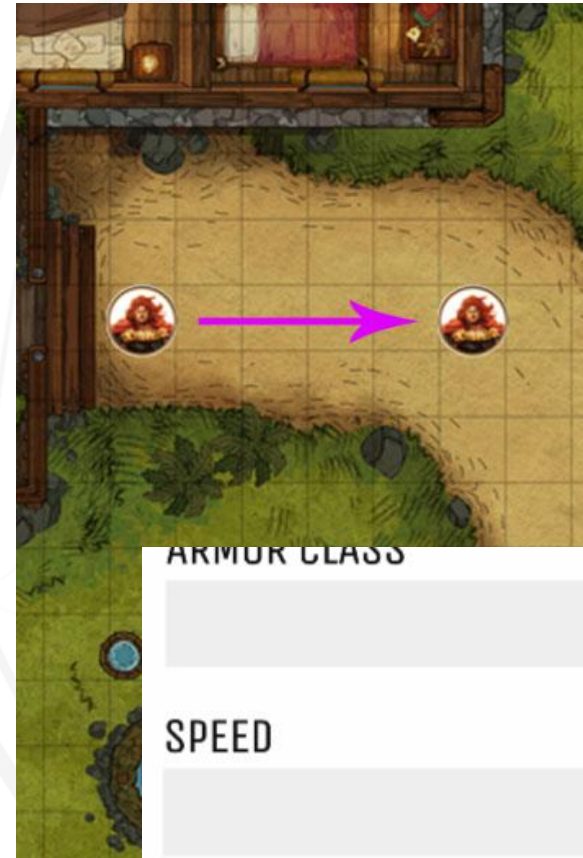
Speed

This is when your character's speed comes in really handy.

Most characters can move somewhere between 25 and 30 feet based on ancestry.

This is how far you can move in a round and also be able to take an action.

You do not have to move. If you take the dash action you can move twice as far.

ARMOR CLASS

SPEED

PERCEPTION

Combat Settings

Your DM will describe the combat setting to you – including terrain, enemies, any obstacles, and any other useful information.

Often times, they will also illustrate this with a map to make it easier to visualize.

Most maps use a grid – squares or hexagons – to measure distance.

Ask your DM to clarify before moving if you have any questions.

Cover

Your character can take cover behind objects in your combat setting – trees, rocks, buildings, and even other creatures. But so can enemies.

Cover provides additional AC and makes it harder for an attack roll to succeed.

A target with half cover gets a +2 AC bonus.

A target with three-quarters cover gets a +5 AC bonus.

Creatures in total cover can't be targeted.

OPTIONS ON YOUR TURN

You have a variety of options during combat in Dungeons & Dragons. Here are a few of the most common choices.

ATTACK
Make one melee or ranged attack.

CAST A SPELL
If your character has access to spells, refer to spell sheet and follow casting rules.

DASH
Take extra movement on your turn equal to your speed.

DISENGAGE
Prevent an enemy from getting an opportunity attack for the rest of the turn.

DODGE
Enemies attack with disadvantage, DEX saving throws have advantage for turn.

GRAPPLE
Roll a STR check against enemy's STR or DEX to put in grapple condition.

HELP
Aid an ally to give advantage on an ability check or attack.

HIDE
Make a Stealth (DEX) check following the rules of hiding.

IMPROVISE
Get creative and make something up. Describe in detail to your DM.

READY
Prepare an action or spell predetermined by a specified trigger.

SEARCH
Use your action to search for something using WIS or INT ability check.

SHOVE
Pushes target 5 feet on successful STR check against target's STR or DEX.

USE AN OBJECT
Interact with an object that requires an action to use it.

Attacking

Attacking consists of two main types of attacks – melee and ranged.

A melee attack is used for hand-to-hand combat. Usually with a weapon, object, or even the character's body.

A ranged attack is used when something is fired or thrown. Like an arrow from a bow, handaxe, or even a rock.

Attacking

Attacking happens in three main steps:

1. Choosing your target and telling your DM.
2. Determining any modifiers that may influence the success or failure of your attack like attacking with advantage or disadvantage.
3. Figuring out the outcome of your attack if it succeeded.

Your DM can help you with any of these steps.

Rolling to Attack

To roll for an attack, roll a d20 and add any modifiers – ability and proficiency.

For melee attacks, you'll add your strength ability modifier.

For ranged attacks, you'll add your dexterity ability modifier.

Add your proficiency modifier if you're using a weapon your character has proficiency in.

If your total meets or exceeds the enemy's armor class, your attack succeeds.

STR

DEX

PROF
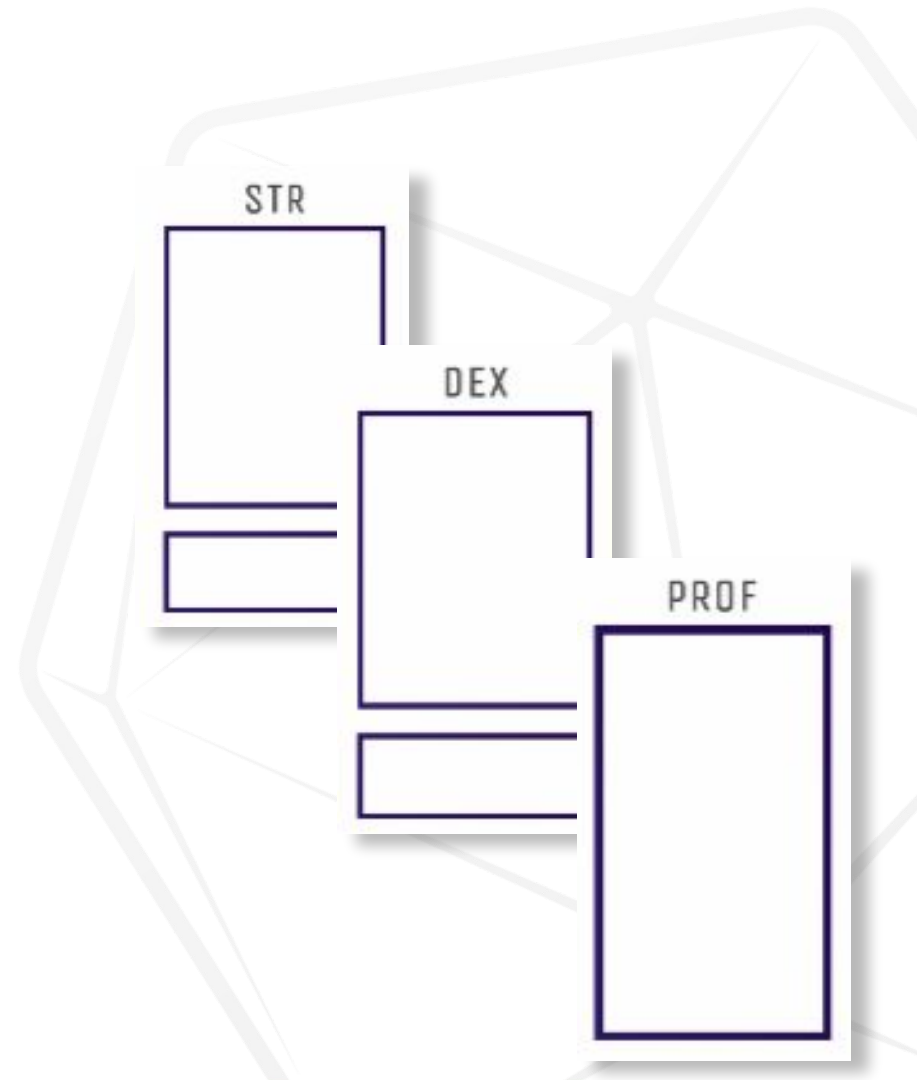
Ranged Attacks

Your ranged weapon should specify how far you can shoot or throw your weapon in a ranged attack.

You may need to move closer to an enemy in order to be in range.

Note that if you are standing within 5 feet of an enemy, most ranged attacks will be made at disadvantage.

ATTACK	RANGE	HIT / DC	DAMAGE	NOTES
Crossbow, Light Ranged Weapon	80 (320)	+3	1d8+1	Simple, Ammunition, Loading, Range, Two-Handed, Range (80/320)

Ranged Attack Example
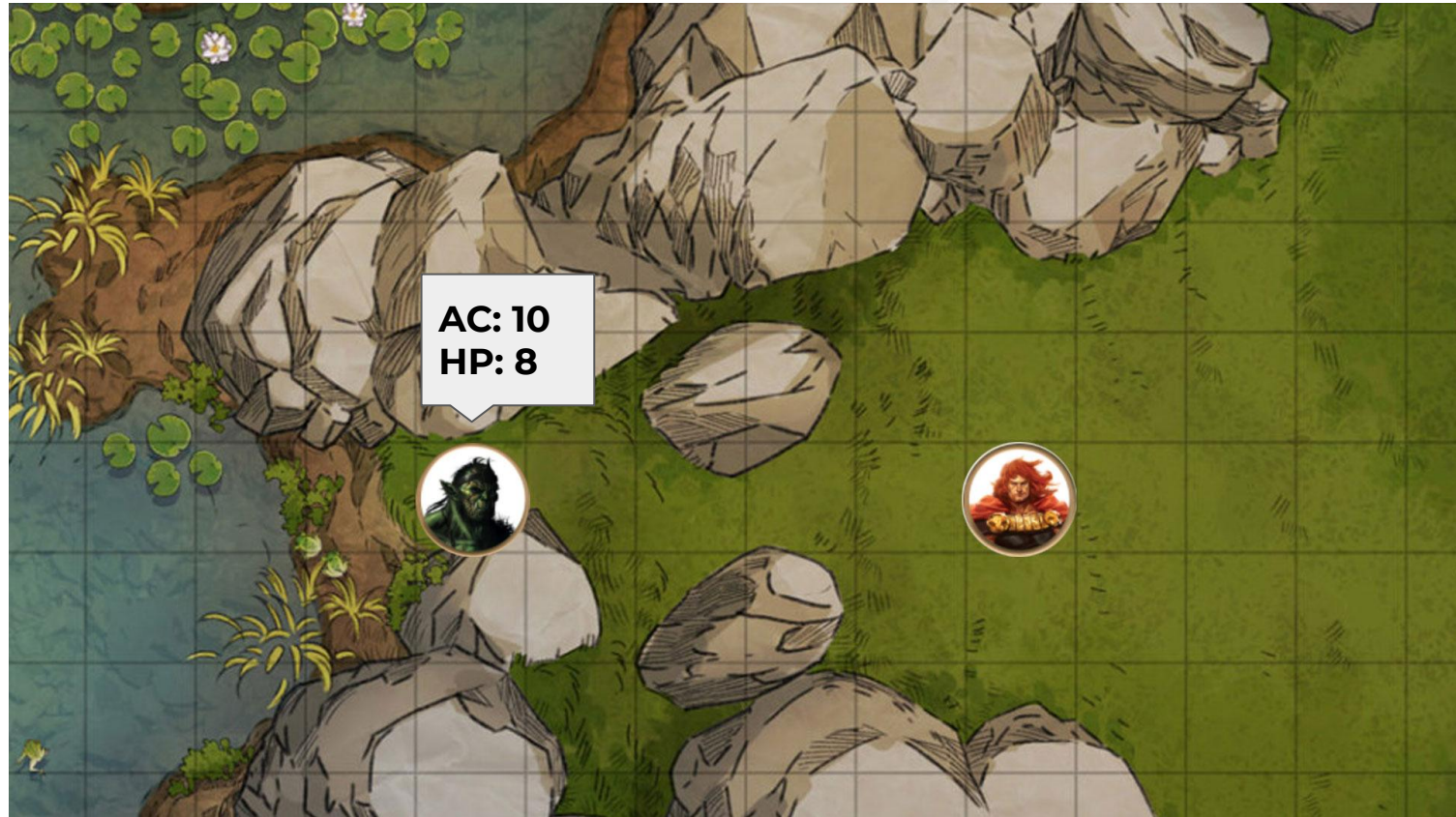
Melee Attacks

Most creatures only have a melee attack range of 5 feet. Be sure to check to see if the weapon you're using has any specific information regarding range.

If you choose, you can make an unarmed strike like a punch or a kick. This gives damage of your strength modifier +1.

⚔	Warhammer Melee Weapon	5 ft. Reach	+3	1d8+1 ⚒ 1d10+1	Martial, Versatile

Melee Attack Example

Doing Damage

If your attack succeeds, you'll damage the creature.

Check your weapon stats and roll damage dice specified and add any modifiers.

When attacking with a weapon, the modifier you add will be the same as the one you used for the attack roll.

Once you have that total, tell the DM and they will modifier the creature's health.

| ATTACK	RANGE	HIT / DC	DAMAGE
Crossbow, Light Ranged Weapon	80 (320)	+3	1d8+1
Warhammer Melee Weapon	5 ft. Reach	+3	1d8+1 1d10+1

Damage Example

AC: 10
HP: 8

Health

You can also get hurt. When a creature attacks you, you will change your hit points to reflect the damage.

You can use spells, items, and potions to heal. This will require an action, but give you hit points back.

If you fall to 0 hit points, you will fall unconscious and you will have to either succeed at death saving throws or be revived by a party member.
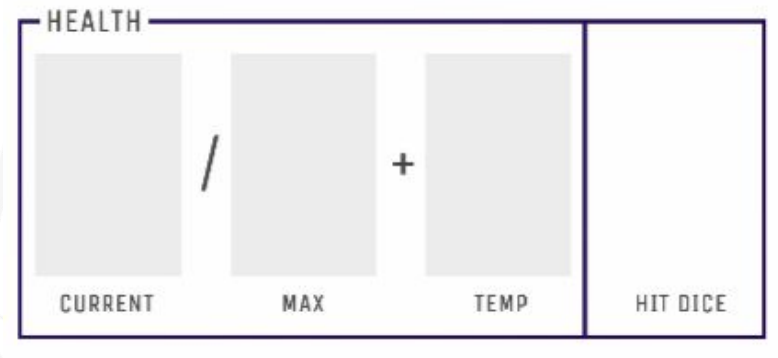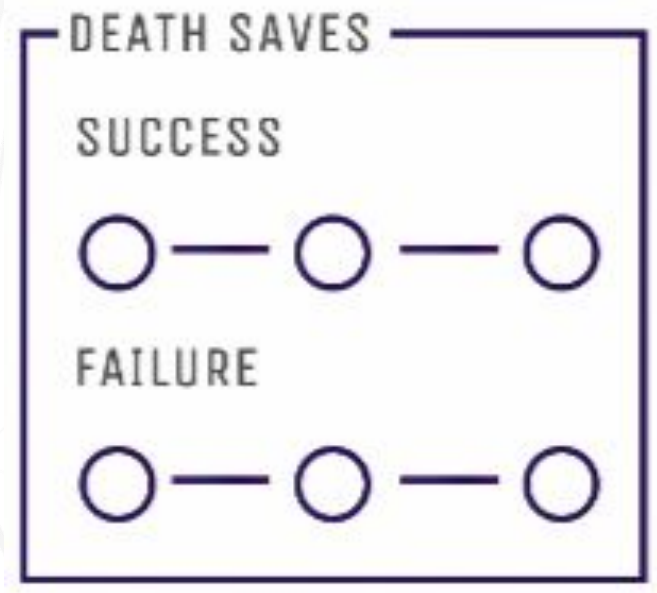
Death Saving Throws

Once you hit 0 hit points and fall unconscious, you'll make a death saving throw each round.

Roll a d20. If you roll 10+, you succeed. If you roll 1-9, you fail.

If you roll a 1, it counts as two fails. If you roll 20, you gain 1 hit point.

If you get 3 successes first, you stabilize and remain unconscious.

If you get 3 fails first, you die.

DEATH SAVES

SUCCESS

○ — ○ — ○

FAILURE

○ — ○ — ○

Spells

There's a LOT of information and rules about spells. Here are some basic things to keep in mind:

- Armor impacts your ability to cast spells. Wearing too much can hinder your ability.

- You have known spells and prepared spells.

- You also have cantrips that you always know.

- Spells often require concentration, materials, saying words, or movement.

Casting Spells

Some spells always succeed at hitting the target. In that case, you just roll for damage or the spell's effect is automatically applied.

Other spells require an attack roll. This is the same as a regular attack roll, but you use your spellcasting modifier (WIS or INT) and proficiency bonus instead.

Refer to individual prepared spells or cantrips to figure out which rules apply.

Guiding Bolt

1st Level Evocation

CAST **SPELL SLOT** [4]   LEVEL — 1st +

4d6 ✹ Damage

Customize ⌄

Casting Time: 1 action
Range/Area: 120 ft.
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round
Source: *PHB*, pg. 248

A flash of light streaks toward a creature of your choice within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 4d6 radiant damage, and the next attack roll made against this target before the end of your next turn has advantage, thanks to the mystical dim light glittering on the target until then.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

Spell Ranges and Areas of Effect

Spells often have a range and an area that they effect.

Check the spell description to see what these stats are.

Range works like ranged weapons and you can't hit an enemy outside of that range.

Area of effect will impact all creatures in the area from the point of origin. These include cone, cube, cylinder, line, and sphere.

Thunderwave

1st Level Evocation

CAST [3] SPELL SLOT   **LEVEL** − 1st +
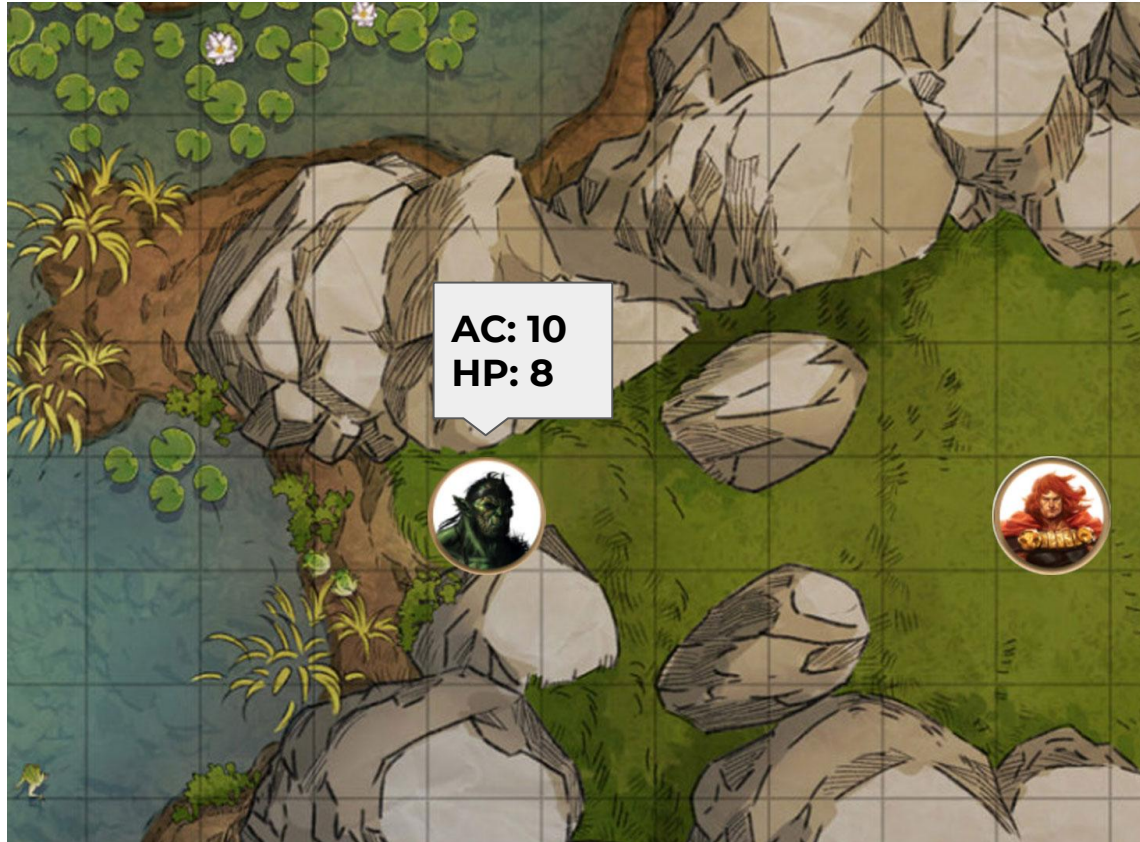
2d8 Damage

Customize ⌄

Casting Time: 1 action
Range/Area: Self/15 ft.
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Attack/Save: CON 13
Source: *PHB*, pg. 282

A wave of thunderous force sweeps out from you. Each creature in a 15-foot cube originating from you must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2d8 thunder damage and is pushed 10 feet away from you. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

In addition, unsecured objects that are completely within the area of effect are automatically pushed 10 feet away from you by the spell's effect, and the spell emits a thunderous boom audible out to 300 feet.

Spell Attack Example

Guiding Bolt

1st Level Evocation

CAST [SPELL SLOT] [4]   LEVEL [−] 1st [+]

4d6 ☀ Damage

Customize ⌄

Casting Time: 1 action
Range/Area: 120 ft.
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 round
Source: *PHB*, pg. 248

A flash of light streaks toward a creature of your choice within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 4d6 radiant damage, and the next attack roll made against this target before the end of your next turn has advantage, thanks to the mystical dim light glittering on the target until then.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

AC: 10
HP: 8

Rules, Rules, Rules

These are just the basic rules of combat. There are many, many, many more rules that apply to nearly every combat situation.
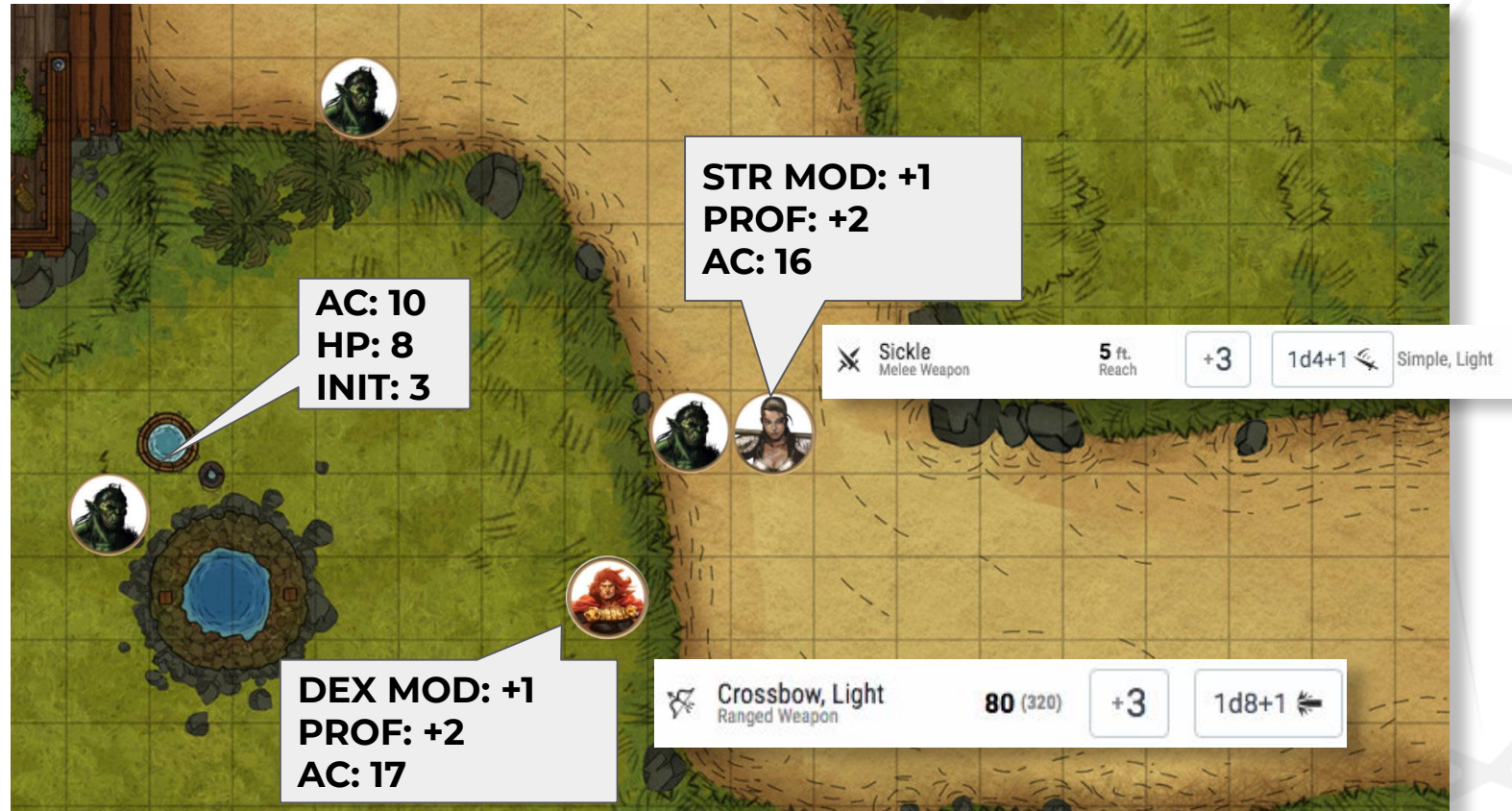
Sometimes, the DM will even have homebrew or house rules that aren't in the official D&D rulebooks.

There are way too many rules to memorize. Even the most experienced DMs have to look up rules all the time.

Don't be afraid to ask your DM if you have a question, reference the rulebooks, or search the internet for the answer. Everyone does this all the time.

Most importantly, don't get so bogged down in rules that you aren't having fun!

Combat Example

AC: 10
HP: 8
INIT: 3

STR MOD: +1
PROF: +2
AC: 16

Sickle
Melee Weapon   5 ft.
Reach   +3   1d4+1   Simple, Light

DEX MOD: +1
PROF: +2
AC: 17

Crossbow, Light
Ranged Weapon   80 (320)   +3   1d8+1

QUESTIONS & SHARING

Where to Get More Information

- Player's Handbook

- D&D Beyond (dndbeyond.com)

- Roll20 (roll20.net)

- Kobold Fight Club (kobold.club)

- Geek & Sundry (geekandsundry.com)

- The Rook Room (therookroom.com)

- Local game stores

COMING UP NEXT TIME

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