

ORIGINAL EDITION DELTA

House Rules Compatible With Original D&D

PLAYER'S RULES (V. 1.0.7) ¹

RACES

Humans: Unlimited level advancement (book limits apply to other races). ²

Dwarves: Infravision 60', resist magic +4, dodge giants +4, find stone traps +1.

Elves: Multi-classed, infravision 60', hide in woods (4 in 6), find wood traps +1.

Halflings: Hide in woods (4 in 6), resist magic +4, ranged attacks +4. ³

CLASSES

Fighters: Use heavy armor, all weapons, fighter feats; attack bonus +1, hit points d8 per level (hp +3/level after name).

Thieves: Use light armor, light weapons, thief skills; attack bonus +2/3, hit points d6 per level (hp +2/level after name).

Wizards: Use no armor, dagger only, magic spells; attack bonus +1/2, hit points d4 per level (hp +1/level after name). ⁴

ALIGNMENT

Three Alignments: Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic. New characters should list either Lawful or Neutral (if Chaotic, secretly inform the DM). ⁵

ABILITIES

Random Abilities: At first level, roll one selected ability 2d6+6, others 3d6 in order. For starting hit dice, re-roll any results of "1" or "2". ⁶

EQUIPMENT

Starting Money: Starting money (3d6×10) and equipment prices are in silver pieces. Chain mail costs 50, plate 200; a silver dagger 30, potion of healing 200, potion of mithridate 1000; rumors 10-60, ads for hires 100 sp each. ⁷

TARGET 20

Core Mechanic: For most combat actions, roll d20 + level + modifiers, with success indicated on a total of 20 or more. ⁸

ABILITY MODIFIERS

Values: See table to the right for standard modifiers. The sequence continues in each direction (1 point modifier for every 3 ability score points).⁹

Effects: Strength: melee attacks & damage. Intelligence: secret door and trap detection. Wisdom: mental-attack saves. Dexterity: missile attacks and armor class. Constitution: hit die rolls. Charisma: reaction rolls.¹⁰

Score	Modifier
3-5	-2
6-8	-1
9-12	0
13-15	+1
16-18	+2
19-21	+3
22-24	+4

FIGHTER FEATS

Feats: Fighters can select one feat every 4 levels (starting at 4th) to expand their combat abilities (see the section later for available feats). When fighting 1st level (1-hit-die) opponents in melee, fighters get one attack per level.¹¹

THIEF SKILLS

Skills: Thieves have the ability to (1) open locks, (2) remove traps, (3) pick pockets, (4) move silently, and (5) hide in shadows. Success requires rolling d20 + level + Dex modifier, and scoring 20 or more (3 tries per target). Thieves add +1 to hear noise and climb wall checks, and score double damage from a silent attack from behind. These bonuses increment every 4 levels.¹²

WIZARD SPELLS

Spells: Wizards start with a spellbook containing all 1st-level spells. Only one instance of a given spell can be memorized at a time (no duplicates). Adding a new spell from a book or scroll takes a roll of d20 + level + Int modifier, scoring 20 or more, and one day per spell level (3 tries per spell). Wizards may research new spells at any level, craft potions & scrolls at 4th, wands & weapons at 8th, and any other magic items at 12th level. See book for costs.¹³

MOVE RATES

Scale: One turn is 1 minute. One round is 10 seconds. One inch is 5 feet (also called one "pace").¹⁴

Encumbrance: Gear carried is measured in stone weight. See table to the right for values.¹⁵

Movement: Characters can carry stone weight of up to 1/3 their Strength score at 12" move rate; up to 2/3 at 9"; and up to full Strength at 6".¹⁶

Items	Weight
Light weapon, helmet, bow, arrows, rope, skins, spikes, torches, lantern	1/3
Medium or heavy weapon, leather, shield, staff, pole, rations, 1K coins	1
Chain mail	2
Plate mail	4

WEAPONS

See the matrix below for melee weapon damage and special effects. ¹⁷

Type	Size		
	Light	Medium	Heavy
Sword	Dagger (1d4)	Sword (1d8)	2-H Sword (1d10)
Spear	Spear (1d6)	Polearm (1d8)	Lance/Pike (1d8) *
Axe	Hand Axe (1d6)	Battle Axe (1d8)	Halberd (1d10)
Club	Mace (1d6)	Morning Star (1d8)	Flail (1d8) **

Types: Swords can be drawn and used in a single round. Spears can be used to attack from a second rank. Axes get +2 to hit targets in medium or heavy armor. Clubs get +4 to hit heavy armor. ¹⁸

Sizes: Light weapons are one-handed, and can be thrown up to 60 feet (12"). Medium weapons are one-handed for man-sized creatures (except polearms). Heavy weapons and polearms are two-handed for men. ¹⁹

Specials: (*) Lances do double damage when used from a charging mount; pikes get double damage when set against such a charge. (**) Flails ignore any opponent shield bonuses. ²⁰

Missile Weapons: Bows and slings fire every round; crossbows every other round. Attack rolls are -1 per 10 feet range. Damage is 1d6 for arrows and quarrels, 1d4 for sling stones. ²¹

Race/Class Restrictions: Halflings can use only light or medium (two-handed) melee weapons, slings, shortbows, and light crossbows. Thieves are skilled in light melee weapons, normal swords, slings, and light crossbows. ²²

COMBAT

Surprise: A roll of 2 in 6 normally indicates surprise. Unseen parties (hidden, invisible, elven cloak) add +2. Silenced parties (motionless, undead, move silently) add +2. Warning (e.g., light, noise, magic detection) foils surprise. ²³

Initiative: Roll d6 initiative for each side; play goes around the table. On each player's turn they can move, then attack, in that order. Figures must stand still to cast spells, fire missiles, or set pikes. ²⁴

Attacks: Attacks are made by rolling d20 + attack bonus + AC of target and scoring 20 or more. Monsters use their hit dice for attack bonus.

Saves: Saving throws are made by rolling d20 + level + modifiers (see table) and scoring 20 or more. ²⁵

Type	Modifier
Spells	0
Breath	+1
Stone	+2
Wands	+3
Death	+4

FIGHTER FEATS

1. **Berserking:** Rage to gain +4 levels (hits, saves, and hit dice) for one melee; afterward, save vs. breath or lose ability for the day. ²⁶
2. **Exceptional Strength:** Add +3 to your Strength ability.
3. **Great Fortitude:** Gain a +4 bonus to saves against poison, disease, and death.
4. **Iron Will:** Gain a +4 bonus to saves against mental attacks, including charm, fear, and illusions.
5. **Mounted Combat:** Gain +2 to hit and +4 damage with mounted lance attacks, and +4 to saves against being unhorsed.
6. **Rapid Shot:** Gain an extra attack every round in missile combat.
7. **Rapid Strike:** Gain an attack on alternate rounds in melee combat. ²⁷
8. **Survival:** Gain a +2 bonus to checks to find food, water, shelter, or avoid being lost in the wilderness.
9. **Toughness:** Add an extra +2 hit points per level.
10. **Tracking:** Track prey on a 4-in-6 chance basis, adjusted for small or large parties, inclement weather, and the like.
11. **Two Weapon Fighting:** Fight with a light weapon in the off hand, for either +2 AC, or an extra attack at -2 to hit each round. ²⁸
12. **Weapon Specialization:** Gain +2 to hit and damage with one weapon of choice.

MULTI-CLASSING

Adding Classes: Elves automatically start with the wizard class, plus one more of their choice. To add a new class, a character needs a score of 16 or more in the new prime requisite, and must sacrifice 1,000 XP. ²⁹

Experience: After each adventure, the character applies all earned XP to a single class of their choice. ³⁰

Benefits: The multi-classed character uses the best entry for armor, weapons, attacks, and saves. Hit points are rolled for each class, with the highest being used. Fighter/wizards may cast spells in leather or chain (melee weapon in one hand, no shield). Thief skills are restricted to leather armor only. ³¹

Original Edition Delta is compatible with Original D&D (1974) and similar game systems. For more information, and free updates to these rules, visit: www.OEDGames.com.



NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This document is available for free at www.oedgames.com. These endnotes are intended for (a) DMs who want to check on reasoning, justifications, and history of the game, and (b) the author himself, so he doesn't keep redoing the same research repeatedly. The document is designed to allow printing only pages 1-4 for players at the table; that is, using a single letter-sized sheet of paper, and without endnotes. For various citations of the associated blog, visit deltasdnd.blogspot.com.
2. By default, racial level limits for nonhumans in the core OD&D books apply (see OD&D Vol-1, p. 7-8). In the fighter class, dwarves are limited to 6th level, elves and halflings 4th. Elves can be wizards to a maximum level of 8th (and this DM allows dwarf & halfling wizards to 4th level max). Thieves are unlimited in level for any race (Sup-I, p. 4). The present author thinks these limits are useful for world-building purposes; but he often places special items or magics that allow PCs to exceed them. Many DMs, of course, waive them completely.
3. Traps here include secret doors, compartments, etc., of the appropriate material. Dwarf +4 dodge bonus is as per AD&D (PHB, p. 16), and statistically more in line with the Chainmail half-hits ability (CM p. 29) than lower values. Halfling ranged modifier echoes the bonus of +3 seen in Sup-I (Errata) and AD&D (MM, p. 50), here rounded to +4 to match other combat bonuses. (Tolkien refers to hobbits as "keen-eyed and sure at the mark"; see blog 2018-01-01.) See also [OD&D Discussion](#). Infravision is noted starting with *Chainmail* p. 43 (Fantasy Reference Table).
4. Optionally, the DM may allow wizards to start with a staff (assume: two-handed, 1d6 damage, no special modifiers). They are allowed use of the *staff of striking* and related items in OD&D Vol-2 (p. 25 & 35). Since they're not in the basic equipment list, we don't further mention them here.
5. New players may need clarification on alignments. In short: Law is peace, Chaos is war. Lawful PCs want to expand civilization; Chaotic types want it broken down; Neutral seek a balance, or only self-interest. See works of Anderson (*Three Hearts and Three Lions*) and Moorcock; blog 2011-02-23 and 2014-10-23. Note that creatures hearing an opposing alignment language will attack (Vol-1, p. 12). Gygax in *The Strategic Review* (TSR) #6, re: law/chaos vs. good/evil, says, "When that was written they meant just about the same thing in my mind" (as Anderson, Ch. 12); in *Dragon* #9 he notes the possibility of reporting a fake alignment. Arneson, FFC p. 52: Good guys take prisoners, pay taxes, obey the king; bad guys give all loot to leader, never take prisoners, stab each other in the back.
6. These boosts reflect the natural-selection effect observed for those surviving 0-level. See blog posts 2014-08-07 and 2015-05-04.
7. Compare the copper, silver, gold pieces to English pence, groats, and nobles (respectively 1/3s and 1/3L). Note that pounds and shillings were never medieval coins (see blog 2010-03-30, 2010-05-19). Statistical analysis

suggests that D&D gp has purchasing power of about a half-shilling (see blog 2019-06-03). Following great value, we take historical shilling values and multiply by 3 for our sp standard (e.g., done for armor here). For silver weapons history, see blog 2016-01-25. Costs for ads & rumors are from Vol-3, p. 23. Potion prices are roughly the base prices in both OD&D and AD&D, assuming alchemist help to reduce the cost (see blog 2020-08-17).

8. For more information on the Target 20 mechanical system, visit the website at: www.oedgames.com/target20.
9. The 3d6 distribution has a standard deviation of about 3 (2.96), so modifiers indicate statistical z-score (number of standard deviations from the mean).
10. We *don't* give earned-experience modifiers for extreme ability scores.
11. The concept of "feats" is intended as a wrapper for various fighter-boosts seen in early editions of D&D, including various subclass options. Compare to the status boosts in *Chainmail* for Heroes and Superheroes (4th, 8th level; used in Arneson-circle games, and documented in Dan Boggs' [ZED](#) rules); and also to 3E D&D Feats (ours tend to a value of 2 such feats together).

The many-attacks rule is the "normal" mode against regular opponents, as expressed in *Chainmail* (p. 30), the D&D FAQ in TSR #2 (p. 3), *Swords & Spells* (p. 1), and the AD&D PHB (p. 25). Later editions have similar options variously called "sweep" or "cleave" attacks, etc. (see blog 2021-05-24, 2021-05-31, and 2021-11-29). It's a key balancing factor against the many one-hit-die monsters that number in the hundreds as per standard lists in O/AD&D (blog 2021-12-06). The DM may opt to apply a single attack and damage roll against all the opponents in one round, or some other ruling. More detail on running large-scale battles is given in *OED Book of War*.

DMs running B/X or BECMI-style games may wish to ignore the sweep-attack ability; however, monster numbers appearing should be greatly reduced for 1st-level types, as compared to O/AD&D. (Arguably this would also balance humanoids vs. other monster groups.)

12. Per Sup-I, "remove traps" deals only with small devices (poison needles, etc.). No special reading abilities are included here. Thief skills should not trigger traps, etc., except possibly on a natural 1 (DM's option). Achieving silent backstab position takes a full round before the attack. Compare the 3 tries rule to listening for noises in AD&D (DMG p. 60).
13. Reasons for no duplication of spells: (1) More like stories of Jack Vance (*Dying Earth*), (2) more balanced (no squatting on an overpowered spell), (3) more interesting variety of effects in-game, (4) easier bookkeeping (by cards or checklist). Note that in Gygax modules usually only a few cleric spells (*cures*) are duplicated in practice. Compare to a dramatic treatment where any power/trick usually gets used only once per episode.

Checks for adding spells from a scroll are harder than in AD&D (PHB p. 10), but can be retried; the one day/level is per DMG p. 117. Use the same check for researching new spells, at +4 per cost increment (this matches the chances in Vol-1, p. 34 at 1st level). We considered a penalty for increasing

spell level (as per DMG p. 119), but found it too restrictive. Costs assume no special resources; if a library is available, then reduce cost by half.

In O/AD&D, scrolls & wands have a default caster level of 6th, staffs 8th (see OD&D Vol-2, p. 32, 34; AD&D DMG p. 128, 133, 135), so arguably we could use these as the revised levels for crafting. In light of our further-simplified rule, we revise the default scroll level to 4th.

14. The time scale matches original *Chainmail* turns of 1 minute, with a shorter round increment for melee (e.g., *Chainmail* Fatigue rules); see blog 2012-07-09. The 1" = 5 feet scale (a) matches the 30mm figure scale, (b) matches the 1/6 time scale adjustment, and (c) makes the *Chainmail* man-to-man missile-fire chances reasonable (not so at larger scale); see blog 2018-08-27. Compare to other TSR/Gygax games in the same year as OD&D, *Warriors of Mars* and *Boot Hill*, which have 1 turn = 10 seconds, 1" = 6 feet scales. Rounds are also 10 seconds in Holmes Basic (p. 20); Moldvay Basic suggests 1" = 5 feet table scale (p. B61). The "pace" here is the Roman pace. There is no change in units for man-to-man action indoors-vs-outdoors; see blog 2018-08-20.
15. For the benefits of stone units for encumbrance, see blog (2007-04-15, 2010-09-29). The DM may wish to audit PC encumbrance post-game.
16. The base combat speed is equivalent to a jog (4 mph = 6 ft/sec); walking would be half speed, running double. No bonus for "charge" movement.
17. Damage parameters are basically the same as in the Sup-I variant (counting Man-sized only), or Moldvay Basic. See blog 2009-02-24, 2014-04-08.
18. Weapon details are inspired by rules in *Chainmail*, Supplement-I, and TSR #1-2. We assume non-swords take a round to draw & ready. Spear advantage is traditionally first attack; we find that awkward at the D&D table, and so replace it with back-rank access, but the DM may wish to grant a first attack otherwise; also, we relax the prohibition on pole arms/pikes in dungeons (say, 6'/10' max length; contrast with Sup-I, p. 15). Gygax supports this in *Dragon* #24 ("The center rank characters will also be able to engage in hand-to-hand combat if they have equipped themselves with spears or thrusting pole arms which are of size useful in the surroundings."). Axe & club modifiers vs. armor in CM/Sup-I tend to be on the order of +1/+2, which we double for the CM-to-D&D conversion. We apply these bonuses vs. animals or beasts with tough hide (AC 5 or better; see DMG p. 28, "horny or bony armor might be classed as plate mail..."), but not extradimensional, fey, or undead monsters. Simple wooden weapons (e.g., like a staff or a monster's crude club) should *not* get these bonuses. The halberd represents any two-handed poleaxe-type weapon (bardiche, lochaber axe, etc.; TSR #2, p. 6). A hammer or military pick is equivalent to a mace (Sup-I, p. 15).
19. In *Chainmail* (p. 10) throwing ranges for axes and spears were given as 3" = 90 ft, javelins 6" = 180 ft. In Vol-2 (p. 31) ranges were given the same 3", i.e., only 30 feet indoors. Modern axe-throwing target competitions are held at 15, 20, or 30 feet; Olympic distance records for shot put around 60 ft, javelin 270

ft (Wikipedia). We use 60 ft here as the maximum (reasonable with 10 foot ceiling, per author calculation). See also [Milks](#), et. al.

20. *Chainmail* gives charging horses a bonus of 1 die per figure (see p. 17, “impetus”). Spears get double damage vs. charge in Vol-2 (p. 31) and Sup-I (p. 15). AD&D PHB gives double damage to lances & spears (p. 37). Cook Expert gives double damage to lances. Set pikes should interrupt a charge against them; Ffoulkes, *Armour & Weapons*, notes pikes would have a special spike in the end to stick in the ground and resist cavalry (Ch. 7). The flail effect is taken from Wikipedia.
21. Rates of fire are interpolated from mass *Chainmail*, where bows fire 2/turn, light crossbows 1/turn, and heavy crossbows ½/turn (when standing). Ranges and accuracy dropoff are calibrated from real-world data, physical modeling, and computer simulation (see blog articles 2010-08-30, 2011-03-07, 2014-04-14, 2015-02-16, 2018-08-06, 2018-08-13, 2019-02-04; simulator on [GitHub](#)). The modifier of -1 per 10 feet is taken as the simplest possible approximation, in the area of most interest, to what should be a logistic function; alternatively, one might consider no modifier to 30', but then -1 per 5 feet beyond that (blog 2019-03-14). The rule here handles targeting at an individual; for firing at larger groups and longer distances, see the Judges' Rules. In theory, we could also give armor bonuses vs. missiles for leather (blog 2011-05-06), or large shields (say +2; see DMG p. 28, or SCA archery materials; but rejected after BOW playtests). Slings are considered very effective with training (as per Gygax in TSR #7; see also blog 2017-05-19).
22. For sizing, see AD&D PHB notes (p. 19) and also 3E size rules. Thief weapons vary greatly by edition (see blog 2017-06-12).
23. Parties with light never surprise monsters except via a door (Vol-3, p. 9). Auto-initiative seems implied in Vol-3, p. 10 (wyvern example), but this is counter-indicated by examples in TSR #2 (p. 3), B/X, AD&D, etc. Undead are always silent (Vol-3, p. 9; Sup-II, p. 1).
24. OD&D has no book rule for initiative. Chainmail had opposed d6's but then intermingled phases (p. 9); TSR #2 seems to have the first round-by-round d6 team initiative that we know of (FAQ, p. 3, modified by Dexterity). Around-the-table turn sequence is asserted by Gygax (in context of ~20 players at table; ENWorld Q&A 2005-02-14). Move restrictions are similar to those in *Chainmail* and *Swords & Spells*. Joshua Macy points out that if initiative was randomized every turn, one would need a phased turn structure to model simultaneous time (see blog 2021-01-29). The DM may permit throwing weapons in the same direction as a forward move. We do not give a free attack against one disengaging from melee (see blog 2018-08-23).
25. This mechanic for saves is somewhat harsher at the lowest levels, and more generous at the highest levels, than Vol-1. Wizards/thieves should get -2 to breath, wands, and death, but this was always dropped in play. See blog 2009-09-03 for charts and analysis regarding the saving throw tables in Vol-1. See [OD&D Discussion](#) for various interpretations of the save categories.

26. The added hit points may either be rolled each time, or taken as an average (say: 20 points), at the DM's option. Damage in the melee is first subtracted from these temporary hit points. Compare to berserkers in Vol-2 (p. 6), followers of Odin and Tyr in Sup-IV (p. 22, 24), the berserker class in *Dragon* #3 (p. 27), and the 3E Barbarian. In AD&D, berserking is most often presented as a curse, causing random attacks, including against friends – e.g., see the *ring of berserk strength*, *scarab of enraging enemies*, *cursed berserking sword*, and artifact power IV-V. However, in the interest of bands of berserkers fighting together, we don't emulate that here. Also see blog comments 2017-09-05.
27. The author is aware that many seem to hate this mechanic. That said, it's balanced with the other offensive feats; compare to AD&D, where the first bump for fighter attacks is given at a rate of 3/2 rounds (PHB p. 25; starting at 7th level). Options for handling the alternating rounds: use a chip or card marker; roll a d6 and allow a 2nd attack on a result of 1-3; or allow a 2nd attack when the first attack die is even.
28. Parrying is in *Chainmail* (p. 25-26); note the value is more than a shield.
29. The 1,000 XP matches the zero-level increment (see Judge's Book). Paul S. reports players taking 2nd class early and leaving it at 0 XP; but not enforcing the 16 ability requirement (from Vol-1, p. 10).
30. This is our take on the classic "freely switch class... but not during the course of a single game" rule (Vol-1, p. 8). It's a fairly common interpretation among OD&D players (see [OD&D Discussion](#)).
31. Consider the many examples of Gygaxian elven fighter/wizards in chain but not plate; e.g., throughout the GDQ modules, and also encounters in the *World of Greyhawk* (1983 boxed set Glossography p. 4). AD&D 2E gave a rule for multiclass wizards to cast only in elven chain; an online poll showed that a majority of AD&D 1E DMs follow this same rule (see blog 2019-07-21). The *D&D Monster & Treasure Assortment* shows elves mostly at AC 5 (chain), with a half-dozen higher-level types at AC 2 (plate).