

ORIGINAL EDITION DELTA

House Rules Compatible With Original D&D

PLAYER'S RULES (V. 1.05)¹

RACES

Humans: Unlimited level advancement.

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 +2.²

CLASSES

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

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

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

ALIGNMENT

Three Alignments: Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic. New characters should list either Lawful or Neutral (if Chaotic, secretly inform the DM).³

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".⁴

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.⁵

TARGET 20

Core Mechanic: For most combat actions, roll d20 + level + modifiers, with success indicated on a total of 20 or more.⁶

ABILITY MODIFIERS

Values: See table to the right for standard modifiers. The sequence continues in each direction (1 point modifier for each 3 ability score points).⁷

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

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.

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 $d20 + \text{level} + \text{Dex modifier}$, and scoring 20 or more (3 tries allowed per target). Thieves strike from behind for double damage (move silent check to position unnoticed), and add +1 to hear noises and climb walls checks (increment these bonuses every 4 levels).⁸

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 $d20 + \text{level} + \text{Int modifier}$, scoring 20 or more; this takes one day per spell level (3 tries allowed per spell). Researching a new spell takes one week per spell level, with the same check, and costs as in Vol-1 (each added increment gives a +4 bonus to the roll).⁹

MOVE RATES

Scale: One turn is 1 minute. One round is 10 seconds. One inch is 5 feet.¹⁰

Encumbrance: Gear carried is measured in stone weight. See table to the right for values.¹¹

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".¹²

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. ¹³

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. ¹⁴

Sizes: Light weapons are one-handed, and can be thrown 60 feet. Medium weapons (except polearms) are one-handed for man-sized creatures. Heavy weapons and polearms are two-handed for men. ¹⁵

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. ¹⁶

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. ¹⁷

Race/Class Restrictions: Halflings can only use 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. ¹⁸

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. ¹⁹

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. ²⁰

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. ²¹

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

FIGHTER FEATS

1. **Berserking:** The character is 3-in-6 per melee round to rage for +2 to hit and immunity to mental attacks (but cannot withdraw).²²
2. **Great Cleave:** The character gains a bonus attack when they drop an enemy in melee (which may chain for yet more attacks).
3. **Great Fortitude:** The character gains a +4 bonus to saves against poison, disease, and death.
4. **Great Strength:** The character adds +2 to Strength.
5. **Iron Will:** The character gains a +4 bonus to saves against mental attacks (including charm, fear, illusions, etc.)
6. **Mounted Combat:** When mounted the character gets +2 to all attacks, and +4 to checks for and against being unhorsed.
7. **Rapid Shot:** Add one attack per round with any missile weapon.
8. **Rapid Strike:** Add one attack per round with any melee weapon.
9. **Toughness:** The character gains +2 hit points per level.
10. **Tracking:** The character has a base 4-in-6 chance to track prey (modified for party size, days elapsed, weather, etc.)
11. **Two-Weapon Fighting:** The character can fight with a light weapon in the off hand, for an extra attack or a parry (+2 AC) each round.²³
12. **Weapon Specialization:** Pick one specific weapon, and gain +1 to hit and +2 damage with that weapon.²⁴

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.²⁵

Experience: After each adventure, the character applies all earned XP to a single class of their choice.²⁶

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.²⁷

Original Edition Delta is compatible with Original D&D (1974) and similar game systems. The original core rules can be purchased online at [DriveThruRPG](#) (search for "Original Edition").



NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This document is available for free at <http://www.oedgames.com/>. It is designed to allow printing only pages 1-4 for players at the table; that is, using a single letter-sized sheet of paper, without endnotes. For various citations of the associated blog, visit <http://deltasdnd.blogspot.com/>.
2. Traps here include secret doors, compartments, etc., of the appropriate material. Dwarf dodge bonus is as per AD&D (PHB, p. 16). The elf rule on multi-classing was the result of a poll (see blog 10/18/10; 48% agreement). We also tried slow movement for dwarves and halflings, but that polled & tested negatively (3/20/10; 64% against). Tolkien refers to hobbits as "keen-eyed and sure at the mark" (see blog 1/1/18).
3. New players often need clarification on alignments. Lawful PCs want civilization peaceful and expansive; Chaotic want civilization broken down and destroyed; Neutral seek a balance, or are simply disinterested. See works of Anderson (*Three Hearts and Three Lions*) and Moorcock; blog 2/23/11 and 10/23/14. Note that creatures hearing an opposing alignment language automatically attack (Vol-1, p. 12). Gygax in *Dragon* #9 remarks on the possibility of reporting a fake alignment. NPC alignments can follow a normal distribution: 1: Lawful, 2-5: Neutral, 6: Chaotic.
4. These boosts reflect the natural-selection effect observed for those surviving 0-level. See blog posts 8/7/14 and 5/4/15.
5. Compare the copper, silver, gold pieces to English pence, groats, and nobles (respectively $\frac{1}{4}$ s and $\frac{1}{2}$ L). Note that pounds and shillings were never medieval coins (see blog 3/30/10, 5/19/10). Real-world medieval costs can be reasonably converted as silver = shillings \times 3; this has approximately been applied to armor. For silver weapons history, see blog 1/25/16. Costs for ads & rumors are from Vol-3, p. 23.
6. For more information on the Target 20 mechanical system, visit the website at: <http://www.oedgames.com/target20/>.
7. The 3d6 ability distribution has a standard deviation of about 3 (2.96), so this modifier represents the statistical z-score (number of standard deviations from the mean). Shortcut for high scores: subtract 10 and divide by 3.
8. 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 if a natural 1 is rolled. Achieving silent backstab position takes a full round before the attack.
9. 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. Note that in Gygax modules usually only a few cleric spells (*cures*) are actually duplicated (and hence: a balance issue with NPCs). 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 here; the one day/level is as per DMG p. 117. The given check for research does match 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 to be too restrictive. Costs assume no special resources; if a library is available, then reduce cost by half.

10. The time scale matches original *Chainmail* turns of 1 minute, with a shorter round increment for melee (e.g., Fatigue rules); see blog 7/9/12. There is no change in units for man-to-man action indoors-vs-outdoors; that is a fundamentally flawed concept. See blog 8/20/18.
11. For the benefits of stone units for encumbrance, see blog (4/15/07, 9/29/10). The DM should occasionally audit PC encumbrance post-game.
12. 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.
13. Damage parameters are basically the same as in the Sup-I variant (counting Man-sized only), or Moldvay Basic. See blog 2/24/09, 4/8/14.
14. Weapon details are inspired by rules in *Chainmail*, Supplement-I, and Strategic Review #1-2. We assume non-swords take a round to draw & ready. Spear advantage is traditionally first attack; we find that tricky at the D&D table, and so replace it with back-rank access (say -2 to hit unless halfling/dwarf in front); also, we relax the prohibition on pole arms/pikes in dungeons (say, 6'/10' max length; contrast with Sup-I, p. 15). 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. monsters that are animals, beasts, or humanoids with tough hide (AC 5 or better), but not extradimensionals, fey, or undead (see DMG p. 28, “horny or bony armor might be classed as plate mail...”). The halberd represents any two-handed poleaxe-type weapon (bardiche, lochaber axe, etc.; SR #2, p. 6). A hammer or military pick is equivalent to a mace (Sup-I, p. 15).
15. 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).
16. *Chainmail* gives charging horses a bonus of 1 die per figure (see p. 17, “impetus”). Sup-I gives the extra damage to spears vs. charge (p. 15). AD&D PHB gives double damage to lances & spears (p. 37). Cook Expert gives double damage to lances. Flail effect is taken from Wikipedia.
17. 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 model, and computer simulation (see blog articles 8/30/10, 3/7/11, 4/14/14, 2/16/15, 8/6/18, 8/13/18; simulator on [GitHub](#)). Technically, a range penalty

that increments per doubling of range would be best, but the simple -1 per 10 feet is a fair approximation. In theory, we could also give armor bonuses vs. missiles for leather (blog 5/6/11), or large shields (say $+2$; see DMG p. 28, or SCA archery materials). Slings are considered very effective with training (see blog 5/29/17).

18. For sizes, see AD&D PHB notes (p. 19) and also 3E size rules. Thief weapons vary greatly by edition (see blog 6/12/17).
19. 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).
20. Around-the-table turn sequence is asserted by Gygax (in context of ~ 20 players at table) in ENWorld Q&A, 2/14/05. Move restrictions are similar to those in *Chainmail* and *Swords & Spells*. Optionally, the DM could permit throwing weapons in the same direction as a forward move. We do not give a free attack against someone disengaging from melee (see blog 8/23/18).
21. 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 9/3/09 for charts and analysis regarding the saving throw tables in Vol-1.
22. Compare to Berserkers (Vol-2), *Dragon* #3 (p. 27), and the 3E Barbarian. See also blog comments 9/5/17.
23. Parrying is in *Chainmail* (p. 25-26); note that value is more than a shield.
24. These feats first appeared as “Warrior Boons” in *Fight On! Magazine* #9 (Spring 2010). The intent is to consolidate fighter options like extraordinary strength (Sup-I, p. 7), multiple attacks (AD&D PHB p. 25), weapon specialization (UA p. 18), various subclasses (ranger, barbarian, cavalier), etc. Note that each feat here has the effect of two 3E-style feats.
25. 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).
26. This is our take on the classic “freely switch class... but not during the course of a single game” rule (Vol-1, p. 8). This is a fairly common interpretation among OD&D players (see [OD&D Discussion](#)).
27. 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). Alternatively those examples could be interpreted as special elven/mithril chain. We assume that bows & shields get in the way of spell casting.

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