Swords & Wizardry
White Box
EDITION

BOOK I OF IV: CHARACTERS

By Marv Breig

Based upon the Swords & Wizardry: Core Rules by Matthew J. Finch

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Introduction

SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX is a fantasy role-playing game. The rules are extremely short compared to the multi-paged rule libraries required to play most modern games. Yet, this game contains within itself the soul of mythic fantasy and the kindling of wonder. The game is powerful *because* it's encapsulated by such a small formula—like a genie imprisoned in the small compass of an unremarkable lamp. This game serves as a good introduction for those learning how to play fantasy games, and is the ultimate tool for the expert Referee who customizes his worlds with variant rules (as it's always easier to add rules than to untangle them away).

And remember, with SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX, you are free to publish your own adventures, house rules, and any other sort of materials designed for this game. Guidelines and requirements are at the end of **Book IV**.

– Matthew J. Finch

Like an archaeologist unearthing ancient ruins, my task was to uncover and preserve the very essence of what made role-playing so great during the genesis of the hobby. These rules are designed to maintain the spirit and philosophy of the oldest of gaming models, back in the days where rules weren't supposed to be "complete"—because half of the fun was making up your own!

I have been playing role-playing games since 1975, when I first discovered a fun game in a little white box, and I enjoy giving the reader of this book the opportunity to discover the flavor of what I found so many decades ago. I would like to thank Matthew Finch for giving me the opportunity to do this, Jason Cone for his wonderful suggestions, and, to quote Sir Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants."

– Marv Breig

Arnold's player: "Oh, yeah. I forgot that."

Referee: "Roll initiative." (Secretly rolls a d6 and gets a result of 6.)

Arnold's player: "I rolled a 2."

Referee: "The goblins attack first. They're all more than ten feet from you, and they move forward with their clubs at the ready."

Arnold's player: "They don't charge?"

Referee: "Nope."

Arnold's player: "They don't get an attack because they closed in. It's my turn to attack, right?"

Referee: "Yes."

Arnold's player: (Rolls a d20.) "16—sweet! Adding my Base "to-hit" Bonus and Strength Bonus gives me a total 'to-hit' roll of 18!"

Referee: (Notes that goblins have an Armor Class of 14, using the ascending AC rules.) "You swing your sword into the leading goblin. Roll for damage."

Arnold's player: (Rolls a d6.) "2 points, but I've got a +1 damage bonus, so that's a total of 3 damage."

Referee: (*That's enough to kill it. The goblin had only 2 hit points.*) "Okay, so as it's moving forward, the goblin slips a little bit in a puddle on the stones of the narrow alley where you're fighting, and skids right onto your sword. As you yank out the blade, the goblin falls dead to the ground. The other two are still attacking, but they look nervous now—obviously starting to reconsider this whole thing."

Referee, even though the Referee is responsible for creating tricky traps, dangerous situations, and running the monsters and other foes the PCs will encounter during the game. In fact, the players and the Referee cooperate with each other to create a fantasy epic, with the Referee creating the setting and the players developing the story of the heroes. If they aren't skillful and smart, the epic might be very short. But it's not the Referee's job to defeat the players—it's his job to provide interesting (and dangerous) challenges and then guide the story fairly. ▪

Ascending AC Combat

If you're using the Ascending AC system, it may be easier to calculate your "to-hit" rolls according to a simple formula. The numbers are the same as the Descending AC tables—this is just a different way of calculating the results. Here's how it's done:

To attack with a weapon, the player rolls a d20 and adds any bonuses to the result. These "to-hit" bonuses now include the character's Base "to-hit" Bonus, as shown on the table below, and may include a Strength Bonus (for attacks with handheld weapons), a Dexterity Bonus (for attacks with missile weapons), and any bonuses for magic weapons. The player then subtracts any "to-hit" penalties they might have from their roll. If the result is equal to or greater than the opponent's Ascending AC, the attack hits.

Table 20: Ascending AC Combat

	Level															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Class	Base "to-hit" Bonus															
Cleric	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4	+5	–	–	–	–	–	–
Fighter	+0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4	+4	+5	+6	+6	–	–	–	–	–	–
Magic-user	+0	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6

Note: The same "bonuses" apply to the Descending AC system, but they don't quite match up to the descending armor classes, so this quick system only works for the ascending AC system.

In order to use this system, you'll need to write down your Base "to-hit" Bonus, and adjust it as you gain levels, but after doing that, you won't have to check the table to see if you score a hit.

Gameplay Example

A Fighter, *Arnold the Lion*, is fighting three goblins in a dark alley of the Glittering City of Semoulia. We eavesdrop just as the encounter begins:

Arnold's player: "I draw myself up to full height and inform them that I'm a captain of the guard. My soldiers are right behind me, and these vermin better disperse or I'll have them brought in for interrogation."

Referee: "Um, no. They're not buying it. You're covered in filth from that garbage pit."
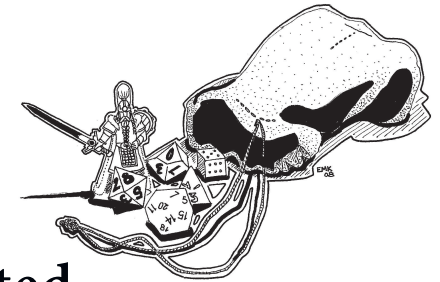
CHAPTER 1:
Getting Started

SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX requires two kinds of participants: (1) The Referee and (2) the Player. For Players, the first step in playing the game is to create a Player Character (PC). This is a simple matter of rolling some dice to determine your character's strength and other basic attributes, picking a character class, and buying in-game equipment. If you're the Referee, however, you've got a bit more preparation to do—that's covered later in *Book III*, **Chapter 7**.

Rule Number One

The most important rule in SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX is that the Referee always has the right to modify the rules. In fact, it's encouraged! This is your game, after all. There are gaps in the rules—holes left open on purpose—because much of the fun of "old school" gaming is being able to make up rules as needed.

Dice

SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX uses several different types of dice, and they are abbreviated herein according to the number of sides they have. For example, a four-sided die is noted as "d4." If this text requires a player to roll "3d4" that means to roll three (3) four-sided dice and add the results together. Other die types (six-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided, twelve-sided, and twenty-sided) follow in the same manner. However, there is no die with 100 sides. When asked to roll d100, instead roll two (2) ten-sided dice, treating the first roll as the "tens" and the second as the "ones." So, if one were to roll a "7" and then a "3", the result would be "73." Please note that rolling two zeroes is treated as "100."

Remember
Throughout this text are suggestions, explanations, and ideas presented in textbox format; feel free to use or discard them at leisure. New rules for governing certain situations can range from simple guidelines like "grab some dice, roll them, and tell me the number" to a complex series of tables for the smallest of details.

Don't forget to check out the S&W website for more house rules. Feel free to submit your own! ■

Character Sheets

A character sheet is a piece of paper designed to organize and contain any and all necessary PC information, for the benefit of both the Referee and Player. For SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX, the character sheet could be something as simple as a 3 × 5" index card—with equipment and spells written on the back, like so:

NAME:

Strength:	Race:
Intelligence:	Class:
Wisdom:	Level/Current XP:
Constitution:	XP Bonus:
Dexterity:	Saving Throw:
Charisma:	Hit Points:
	Weapon:
Starting Gold:	Armor Class:

Larger and more detailed sheets can be found online at the S&W website. Feel free to create and share your own designs.

Attribute Scores

The basic abilities are numbers which represent the Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Constitution, Dexterity, and Charisma of a character. The standard way to create attribute scores is to roll 3d6 for each attribute in the previously mentioned order. Once those rolls have been made, it is often obvious which type of character best fits the abilities—though, the player always has the option to play any class desired.

Rolling Abilities
Some Referees prefer to allow players more flexibility in their choice of class. One possible option would be to roll 3d6 a total of six times and allow players to "arrange to taste." This allows the player to put the best results on the abilities

Universal Attribute Bonus

Each attribute has the potential to modify what you can do. These rules encourage the use of the following table for the use of all abilities—except that of Charisma, which has its own table. Referees will have to decide how and when these bonuses apply and should feel free to tinker with the values if desired. (If the Referee decides to even use them at all!) For example, some prefer the "average" range to be 9–12 and will adjust the table accordingly.

Saving Throws

From time to time, a spell or some other kind of hazard requires you to make a "saving throw." A successful saving throw means that the character avoids a threat or lessens its effect. Each character class has a saving throw target number which gets lower and lower as the character gains levels. To make a saving throw, roll a d20. If the result is equal to or greater than the character's saving throw target number, the saving throw is successful.

Turning the Undead

Clerics have the ability to "turn" the undead, causing them to flee or destroying them outright. When a turning attempt is made, roll 3d6 and consult the **Turning Undead** table (on the following page) for the result.

➤ If the result on the dice is equal to or greater than the **number** shown on the table, all undead creatures of the targeted type are turned and will flee for 3d6 rounds (or cower helplessly if they are unable to flee).

➤ For lawfully aligned Clerics, if the table indicates a "**D**" then the undead creature is destroyed automatically and will crumble to dust. For chaotic Clerics, a result of "**D**" indicates that the undead are forced into servitude and are under the command of the Cleric for 24 hours.

Table 19: Turning Undead

Undead HD	Examples	Clerical Level									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9–13	14+
1	Skeleton	10	7	4	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
2	Zombie	13	10	7	4	D	D	D	D	D	D
3	Wight	15	13	10	7	4	D	D	D	D	D
4	Wraith	17	15	13	10	7	4	D	D	D	D
5	???	–	17	15	13	10	7	4	D	D	D
6	Mummy	–	–	17	15	13	10	7	4	D	D
7	Spectre	–	–	–	17	15	13	10	7	4	D
8	Vampire	–	–	–	–	17	15	13	10	7	4
9–11	???	–	–	–	–	–	17	15	13	10	7
12–18	Lich	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	15	13	10
???	Demon	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	17	15	13

Turn Undead (*Variant*)

Referees who wish to limit the use of the Turn Undead ability might try to count this as merely a 1st level Cleric spell.

Morale

Certain monsters, such as mindless or undead creatures, are fearless and will always fight to the death. The majority, however, will not continue to fight a hopeless battle and will seek to retreat, surrender, or flee. The Referee will decide when monsters abandon battle and retreat, based upon the situation and the monster's intelligence. Referees should also use morale to determine the actions and loyalty of hirelings or other companion NPCs.

Negotiation and Diplomacy

Some combats can be averted with a few well chosen words (even lies). If the party is outmatched or the monsters don't seem likely to be carrying much in the way of loot, the party might elect to brazen their way through in an attempt to avoid combat or at least delay it until more favorable conditions arise.

Spells

Spell casting begins at the start of the combat round. It is possible to cast a spell while within melee range of an opponent (10 feet) but if the caster suffers damage while casting a spell, the spell is lost. Unless stated otherwise, the spell takes effect in the caster's initiative phase.

Loyalty

The Referee may wish to make "loyalty checks" for NPCs put into dangerous situations or ones offered bribes to change sides during a conflict. When a loyalty check is made, roll 3d6 and consult the **Loyalty** table for the result. Remember that these checks can be modified by a Player's Charisma score.

Table 18: Loyalty

Roll	Loyalty
3	Traitor
4–5	-2 on next loyalty check
6–8	-1 on next loyalty check
9–12	Average
13–15	+1 on next loyalty check
16–17	+2 on next loyalty check
18	Loyalist

Good treatment, respect, and a fair share of treasure earned should garner bonuses to loyalty checks, while abuse, physical or otherwise, will bring about penalties, abandonment, or worse. NPCs should be treated as distinct individuals, and not mere extensions of the Player Character.

Table 1: Universal Attribute Bonus

Attribute Roll	Description	Bonus
3–6	Below Average	-1 (or -5%)
7–14	Average	–
15–18	Above Average	+1 (or +5%)

Experience Bonus

Each character gets a bonus percentage to their "experience points" (XP) that will increase the amount of experience points gained during an adventure. All characters add together their percentage Prime Attribute Bonus, Wisdom Bonus, and Charisma Bonus for a total experience bonus for the character. The maximum attainable bonus is 15%.

Strength

A high Strength lets a character carry more weight and may (given the appropriate house rules) give him "to-hit" or damage bonuses when attacking with a sword or other melee weapon. Strength is the Prime Attribute for Fighters.

Intelligence

Intelligence represents IQ, reasoning, and the ability to solve puzzles or understand difficult concepts. A high Intelligence score gives a character an additional language for every point above 10. Intelligence is the Prime Attribute for Magic-users.

Wisdom

Wisdom determines a character's insight, perception, and good judgment. Wisdom is the Prime Attribute for Clerics.

Constitution

Constitution refers to the health and endurance of a character. A high Constitution score gives a character an additional hit point per hit die.

Dexterity

Dexterity is a combination of coordination and quickness. A high Dexterity score gives a character a bonus on their "to-hit" roll when attacking with a bow or other ranged weapon.

that best suit a particular character concept.

A more modern trend is to allow players to roll 4d6 (drop the lowest) for each attribute. Given S&W's reduced dependence on inflated attribute scores, this is largely unnecessary. ∎

Attribute Bonuses
Some Referees may be inclined to allow the following house rules:

Strength
Fighters can use their Strength Bonus to modify their "to-hit" and damage results when using melee weapons.

Intelligence
Magic-users can use their Intelligence Bonus to improve "spell effectiveness" (i.e. target suffers a loss on his saving throw).

Wisdom
Clerics can use their Wisdom Bonus to improve "spell effectiveness" in the same way Magic-users use their Intelligence Bonus.

Dexterity
Dexterity can be used to modify a character's

Armor Class. This may be limited to more swash-buckling campaigns or in games where armor is more limited. ∎

Charisma

A highly charismatic character has a better chance to talk his way out of trouble and can lead more followers than a character with a lower Charisma.

You can use your Charisma to modify the number of Non-Player Character (NPC) hirelings you can acquire. These hirelings include specialists (ship captains, assassins, etc.) and non-human creatures, but do not usually include basic men-at-arms. You can use your Charisma to modify the loyalty of these NPCs (See **Loyalty**, Page 22).

Table 2: Charisma Bonus

Charisma	Hirelings	Loyalty
3	1	-2
4–5	2	-2
6–8	3	-1
9–12	4	0
13–15	5	+1
16–17	6	+2
18	7	+2

Hit Points

Hit points (HP) represent the amount of "damage" a character can take before dying and are determined by the amount of hit dice (HD) a character has at their particular class level. If a Player begins the game with a 1st level Fighter (1+1 HD) he would therefore roll 1 HD (1d6) and add "+1" to the end result to determine his PC's starting HP.

Hit points are re-rolled each time a Player Character advances in level—however, if the re-roll results in a character having fewer hit points for their new level than their previous level, ignore the re-roll and retain the prior amount.

Starting Gold

Roll 3d6 and multiply the result by 10. This represents the number of gold pieces (gp) that a character possesses at the start of the campaign.

Specific Situations

The following are a compilation of guidelines and instructions for handling certain, specific situations that might arise during combat.

Damage and Death

When a character (or creature) is hit, the amount of damage taken is deducted from his hit points. When HP reaches 0, the character dies.

Healing

In addition to the various magical means of restoring HP, a character will recover 1 full hit point per day of uninterrupted rest. Four weeks of rest will restore all of a character's HP—regardless of how many the character lost.

Invisible Opponents

An invisible opponent can only be attacked if their general location is known and the attack suffers a -4 penalty "to-hit." Note that more powerful monsters (those with sensitive smell, hearing, or those with more than 6 HD) will frequently be able to detect invisible opponents; the Referee should determine the chance of this according to the creature concerned and the situation.

Melee Attack

A melee attack is an attack with a hand-held weapon such as a sword, spear, or dagger. A character's optional Strength Bonuses "to-hit" and damage are added to melee attacks. Two combatants within ten feet of each other are considered to be "in melee."

Missile Attack

Missile attacks are attacks with ranged weapons such as crossbows, slings, or thrown axes. A character's Dexterity Bonus for missile attacks is added to the "to-hit" roll when the character is using missile weapons. When using missiles to fire into melee, it is not possible to choose which opponent (or friend!) will receive the brunt of the attack.

Death
Referees have different ideas concerning how lethal a game should be. For this reason, many allow characters to become "unconscious" at 0 HP and their death is staved off until they reach some predetermined negative number.

For example, many Referees employ a house rule which allows a character's HP to fall below 0 by as many points as their level before the character dies; a 4th level character might die only if he falls below -4 HP. ∎

Binding Wounds
Referees can allow characters to bind 1d4 HP worth of wounds following a battle. This is of particular use in low-magic campaigns or in adventures where none of the Players has chosen to run a Cleric.

Note that the character can only recover HP lost during this particular battle. Recovered HP cannot exceed the uninjured maximum amount. ∎

Table 15: Cleric Attack Rolls

	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]	0 [19]	-1 [20]	-2 [21]
Level	Attack Roll (d20) Required to hit Opponent's Armor Class											
1–3	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
4–5	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
6–7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Target Armor Class [Ascending Armor Class]

Table 16: Fighter Attack Rolls

Target Armor Class [Ascending Armor Class]

	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]	0 [19]	-1 [20]	-2 [21]
Level	Attack Roll (d20) Required to hit Opponent's Armor Class											
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3–4	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
6–7	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
9–10	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Table 17: Magic-user Attack Rolls

Target Armor Class [Ascending Armor Class]

	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]	0 [19]	-1 [20]	-2 [21]
Level	Attack Roll (d20) Required to hit Opponent's Armor Class											
1–4	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
5–6	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
7–8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9–10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
11–12	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
13–14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
15–16	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

CHAPTER 2:
Character Classes

There are three character classes in the game: the Cleric, the Fighter, and the Magic-user. The Referee is free to invent other character classes or may allow optional classes and races from other fantasy games.

The Cleric

Clerics are armored priests who serve a particular alignment, religion, or patron deity. Players may make up the details of faith if the Referee doesn't use a particular mythology for the campaign.

Regardless of the details, the Cleric is a champion of his faith and/or moral alignment. Your character may be a sinister witch-hunter, an exorcist of demons, a shining knight of the faith, or a secret agent of some temple hierarchy. Since many of the Cleric's abilities are oriented toward healing and protecting, they tend to play a support role during combat. However, they are able to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the party's Fighters if need be—at least for a while.

Table 3: Cleric Advancement

Level	Experience	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw	Spells 1	2	3	4	5
1	0	1	15	–	–	–	–	–
2	1,500	2	14	1	–	–	–	–
3	3,000	3	13	2	–	–	–	–
4	6,000	3+1	12	2	1	–	–	–
5	12,000	4	11	2	2	1	–	–
6	24,000	5	10	2	2	1	1	–
7	48,000	6	9	2	2	2	1	1
8	96,000	6+1	8	2	2	2	2	2
9	192,000	7	7	3	3	3	2	2
10	384,000	8	6	3	3	3	3	3

Cleric Class Abilities

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: Because Clerics dislike the shedding of blood, they may only use blunt weapons (club, flail, mace, etc.) and the only missile weapon they are allowed is oil. Clerics have no armor restrictions.

Spell Casting: Clerics cast divine spells from a specific spell list, as per the Cleric Advancement table. Each day, the Cleric prays for a certain set of spells, choosing any spells from the standard list. Clerics of specific gods might have entirely different sets of spells as designed by the Referee, but the standard Cleric uses the standard spell list.

Saving Throw: Clerics receive a +2 bonus when making saving throws vs. poison and paralysis.

Banishing Undead: Clerics can use their holiness to "Turn" the undead, causing them to flee (or, as is the case with evil Clerics, bring them to heel as servants and minions). (See **Turning Undead**, Page 22)

Establish Temple: At tenth level, a Cleric who chooses to build and dedicate a temple to their deity of choice may attract a body of loyal followers who swear fealty to him.

Experience Bonus for Wisdom: Wisdom is the Prime Attribute for Clerics, meaning that a high Wisdom score grants them an additional 5% experience on top of the regular experience point bonus granted to all characters with high Wisdom scores.

The Fighter

The Fighter is a warrior, trained in battle and in the use of armor and weapons. Your character might be a ferocious Viking raider, a roaming samurai, or a medieval knight. Because they are the best equipped of all the character classes to dish out and absorb damage, Fighters often end up on the front lines, going toe-to-toe with dragons, goblins, and evil cultists. As a Fighter, the down-and-dirty work is up to you.

Table 4: Fighter Advancement

Level	Experience	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw
1	0	1+1	14
2	2.000	2	13
3	4,000	3	12
4	8,000	4	11
5	16,000	5	10
6	32,000	6	9

Determine Initiative

At the beginning of the first combat round, each side rolls initiative on a d6—high roll wins. The winning side acts first, casting spells, moving, and attacking. The other side takes damage and casualties, and then has its turn.

Initiative rolls may result in a tie. When this happens, both sides are considered to be acting simultaneously. The Referee may handle this situation in any way he chooses—with one caveat. The damage inflicted by combatants during simultaneous initiative is inflicted even if one of the combatants dies during the round. It is possible for two combatants to kill each other in this situation.

> **Intent**
> Some Referees prefer to have all parties make a "statement of intent" before they roll initiative in order to force players to decide what they're doing before they know who goes first. ◾

The Attack Roll

The most important rule to understand about combat is the attack roll.

To attack with a weapon, the player rolls a d20 and adds any bonuses to the result. These "to-hit" bonuses may include a Strength Bonus (for attacks with hand held weapons), a Dexterity Bonus (for attacks with missile weapons), and any bonuses for magic weapons. The player then subtracts any "to-hit" penalties they might have from their roll.

The attack roll is then compared to a table to see if the attack hits. If the attack roll is equal to or higher than the number on the table, the attack hits. If you are using the Ascending AC system, rather than refer to these tables, there is a quick formula presented at the end of this chapter that you can use (See **Ascending AC Combat**, Page 23). Your Referee will determine whether or not your game will use Descending AC or Ascending AC.

If an attack hits, it inflicts damage (as indicated on the various weapon tables). The damage is subtracted from the defender's hit point total (See **Damage and Death**, Page 20).

> **20's and 1's**
> Many Referees have a rule that a "natural" roll of 20 is an automatic hit or inflicts double damage and that "natural" 1's are automatic misses and may cause characters to drop their weapon or trip. Theses are commonly referred to as "critical hits" and "fumbles", respectively. ◾

Time

The Referee will be required to make general rulings on the passage of time during the course of a campaign (e.g. "A few hours later…") and should be governed by common sense. There are, however, two important time measurements that merit brief definitions—the "turn" and "combat round." A turn (lasting ten minutes) is used to track and measure actions, movement and resources when our intrepid adventurers are in dangerous places. The shorter combat round (lasting one minute) is used in the midst of battle to allow for a faster blow-by-blow account of the action.

Movement

Base movement rate for all races is calculated in tens of feet per move in the underworld. Characters are allowed two moves per turn.

Table 13: Movement Rate

Weight Carried (lb.)	Elf/Human	Dwarf/Halfling
0–75	12	9
76–100	9	6
101–150	6	3
151–300	3	3

Table 14: Movement Rate Adjustments

Movement Type	Adjustment
Careful	Half of Average Rate
Normal	Average Rate
Running	Double Average Rate

Combat

When the party of adventurers comes into contact with enemies, the order of events in the combat round is as follows:

1. The Referee determines if one side or the other is entitled to a free attack or move as a result of surprise—this is either a judgement or a die roll of some kind, depending on the circumstances.
2. Determine initiative. One roll is made for each side, not for each individual in combat.
3. Party with initiative acts first (missile fire, casting spells, movement, melee attacks, etc.) and results take effect.
4. Party that lost initiative acts; results take effect.
5. The round is complete; keep turn order for the next round if the battle has not been resolved.

Table 4: Fighter Advancement (cont.)

Level	Experience	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw
7	64,000	7	8
8	128,000	8	7
9	256,000	9	6
10	512,000	10	5

Fighter Class Abilities

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: Fighters are trained in warfare and, as such, have no weapon or armor restrictions.

Combat Machine: Against foes of one hit dice (HD) or fewer, Fighters get one attack per level each combat round.

Saving Throw: Fighters receive a +2 bonus when making saving throws vs. death and poison.

Establish Stronghold: At ninth level, a Fighter who chooses to build a castle is considered to have the rank of "Baron" bestowed upon him by the local ruler or monarch. He may choose to attract a body of loyal men-at-arms who will swear fealty to him.

Experience Bonus for Strength: Strength is the Prime Attribute for Fighters, meaning that a high Strength score grants them an additional 5% experience.

The Magic-user

The Magic-user is a mysterious figure, a student of arcane powers and spell casting. They can be devastating opponents. However, at lower levels, they are quite vulnerable and must be protected by the other party members. As Magic-users progress, they generally become the most powerful of the character classes—holding sway over the political destinies of great kingdoms and able to create wondrous magical artifacts.

Table 5: Magic-user Advancement

Level	Experience	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw	Spells					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
1	0	1	15	1	–	–	–	–	–
2	2,500	1+1	14	2	–	–	–	–	–
3	5,000	2	13	3	1	–	–	–	–
4	10,000	2+1	12	4	2	–	–	–	–
5	20,000	3	11	4	2	1	–	–	–
6	40,000	3+1	10	4	2	2	–	–	–

Table 5: Magic-user Advancement (cont.)

Level	Experience	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw	Spells					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
7	80,000	4	9	4	3	2	1	–	–
8	160,000	4+1	8	4	3	3	2	–	–
9	320,000	5	7	4	3	3	2	1	–
10	640,000	5+1	6	4	4	3	2	2	–
11	–	6	5	4	4	4	3	3	–
12	–	6+1	4	4	4	4	4	4	1
13	–	7	3	5	5	5	4	4	2
14	–	7+1	2	5	5	5	4	4	3
15	–	8	2	5	5	5	4	4	4
16	–	8+1	2	5	5	5	5	5	5

Magic-user Advancement

Some Referees may want to allow the Magic-user to advance beyond 10th level and access spells beyond 5th level. For your benefit, we have supplied a basic advancement method suitable for these purposes. The amount of experience necessary to advance beyond 10th level is to be determined by the Referee. ■

Magic-user Class Abilities

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: Magic-users tend to spend their waking hours in study of arcane tomes and scrolls. As such, they have little time to train with weapons or learn how to properly engage in physical combat. Magic-users may only wield daggers or staves, and are not allowed the use of armor.

Spell Casting: Unlike the Cleric, the Magic-user owns a book of spells—which does not necessarily include all of the spells on the standard lists. Reading from this book, the Magic-user presses a select spell formula into his mind, effectively "preparing" it to be cast. Once a prepared spell is cast, the spell formulae disappears from the Magic-user's mind, and must be prepared again before another attempt can be made to cast it. However, it is possible to prepare a spell multiple times using the available "slots" in the Magic-user's memory. If the Magic-user finds spell scrolls during an adventure, he can copy them into his spell book.

Saving Throw: Magic-users receive a +2 bonus when making saving throws vs. spells—including those cast from wands and staves

Experience Bonus for Intelligence: Intelligence is the Prime Attribute for Magic-users, meaning that a high Intelligence score grants them an additional 5% experience.

CHAPTER 5:
Playing the Game

Once characters have been created, the Referee will describe where the characters are and what they can see. The game might start in a rural peasant village, a vast and teeming city spiked with towers and minarets, a castle, a tavern, or at the gates of an ancient tomb. From that point on, Players describe what their characters do. Going down stairs, attacking a dragon, talking to other Player Characters (PCs) or Non-Player Characters (NPCs) controlled by the Referee —all of these kinds of actions are decided by the players. The Referee then describes what happens as a result: the stairs lead down to a huge tomb, the dragon attacks the characters, etc. The rules below are guidelines handling events like combat, gaining experience, movement, healing, dying, and other important parts of the game.

Basically, you and the Referee work together, with the Referee handling the details of a dangerous fantasy world, and you handling what your character does in it. The epic story of your character's rise to greatness (or death in the effort) is yours to create in the Referee's world.

Gaining Experience

Characters are awarded Experience Points (XP) for killing monsters and accumulating treasure. Monsters have set Experience Point values in their descriptions, and one gold piece acquired is equal to one XP. Experience is awarded for accumulating treasure because every gold piece gained by a character is an index of his player's skill. Awarding experience only for killing monsters fails to reward a party of adventurers that successfully lures a dragon away from its hoard so that its treasure can be stolen without a fight—it fails to reward characters that operate by intelligence, stealth, trickery, and misdirection.

Each character class has a Prime Attribute listed in its description, and the character creation process details how to use your attributes to determine the character's total XP bonus.

Ascending AC System

For the ascending system, an unarmored person has an AAC of [10]. Your armor adds to your AC, so the higher your AC, the harder it is for enemies to hit you. To calculate your Armor Class, look at the Armor table on the previous page, in the **Effect on [AAC]** column. For whatever type of armor you bought, add the number shown in brackets to your base AC of [10]. That's your new Armor Class.

Comparing Armor Class Systems

To translate between the Ascending and Descending AC systems, the ascending armor class (AAC) and descending armor class (AC) values should add up to 19. Thus, AC 7 is the same as AAC [12] (19 − 7 = 12).

Hiring Assistants

Many characters, particularly when first starting an adventuring career, are in need of hirelings to assist in carrying loot or fighting monsters. Characters are free to create advertisements and inquire at local establishments to find available hirelings. The table below assumes that a typical adventure lasts roughly one week. Prices are in gold pieces.

Table 12: Hiring Assistants

Hireling Type	Cost
Alchemist	250
Animal Trainer	125
Armorer	25
Assassin	500
Blacksmith	5
Captain, Ship	75
Engineer	200
Horseman	3
Non-combatant (servant, torch bearer)	2
Sage	500
Sailor	3
Soldier	5
Spy	125

These rates are for humans only. Demi-humans cost more to hire—and it may take more than just the promise of gold coins.

CHAPTER 3:
Character Races

In a fantasy world, humans often aren't alone. Elves may populate the great forests, Dwarves may carve their halls and mines into the heart of the earth, and Halflings may reside in the comfortable hill-houses of their bucolic shires. By contrast, some fantasy worlds depict an isolated human race pitted against ancient pre-human evils and the grim, savage wilderness of worlds at the dawn (or dusk) of human civilization itself.

Some fantasy worlds, as a third example, accentuate the bizarre, with a wide variety of fantasy races available to the players—such worlds are filled with conflict and contradictions, always with a new wonder to be found beyond the next corner. The Referee determines what non-human races, if any, you can choose for your character.

The Dwarf

Dwarves tend to grow up in underground cities. As such, Dwarves easily take note of certain features of stonework: sloping corridors, moving walls, and traps made of stone (in particular: falling blocks, rigged ceilings, and tiny slits designed to release arrows, darts, or poison gas). There are no established rules or die roll for making use of these abilities; exactly what the Dwarf does or does not perceive is for the Referee to decide.

Dwarven Race Abilities

Character Advancement: The only character class available to Dwarves is that of the Fighter, but are typically allowed to advance only as high as 6th level.

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: Like human Fighters, Dwarven Fighters have been trained in warfare and have no weapon or armor restrictions.

Hereditary Foes: Dwarves receive a +1 bonus ("to-hit" or to damage) when combating orcs or goblins.

Keen Detection: Dwarves are good at spotting traps, slanting passages, and construction while underground.

Hard to Hit: Being small, Dwarves are typically awarded some defensive bonus in combat—perhaps a +2 bonus against men-folk and +4 against giants.

Saving Throw: Dwarves do not use magic and, as such, are somewhat immune to its effects; they receive a +4 bonus when making saving throws vs. magic. As they are also quite hardy folk in other respects, they also receive a +1 bonus when making saving throws vs. death and poison.

Languages: For campaigns which give each race their own dialect, Dwarves should be able to speak with gnomes, goblins, orcs, and kobolds.

The Elf

The Referee can interpret Elves in many different ways. Are they faerie-folk of Irish legend, the Vanir of Norse mythology, or perhaps something more akin to the Elves of Tolkien's imagination?

As a baseline, most Elves are associated with magic as well as being skilled with the sword and bow. The Elven adventurer may choose, on any given day—perhaps when the moon rises—whether to use the capabilities of the Fighter or Magic-user. As a result, the Elf has two alternate advancement paths (experience points, hit dice, saving throws, "to-hit" bonuses, etc.) depending upon whether he donned steel that day or summoned up the power to cast spells.

Elves must use a spell book to prepare spells, just as a Magic-user. Spells disappear from his casting capability once they are cast, until prepared again.

Elven Race Abilities

Character Advancement: Elves may use either the Fighter or Magic-user class advancement tables, to be announced at the start of an adventure. They are typically allowed to progress only to 4th level as Fighters and 8th as Magic-users.

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: When an Elf adventures as a Magic-user, he has the same weapon and armor limitations as a Magic-user. The exception to this would be magic armor, which may still be worn even when the Elf is acting as a Magic-user.

Hereditary Foes: Elves gain an extra +1 ("to-hit" or to damage) when fighting goblins, orcs, intelligent undead, and lycanthropes. Elves are also immune to paralysis caused by undead such as ghouls.

Keen Detection: Elves are good at spotting hidden and concealed doors.

Table 10: Missile Weapons (cont.)

Weapon	Damage	Rate of Fire*	Range†	Weight (lb.)	Cost
Bow, long	1d6	2	70 ft.	5	40
Bow, short	1d6-1	2	50 ft.	5	25
Case (30 bolt capacity)	–	–	–	1	5
Crossbow, heavy	1d6+1	½	80 ft.	5	25
Crossbow, light	1d6-1	1	60 ft.	5	15
Pouch (20 stone capacity)	–	–	–	1	1
Quiver (20 arrow capacity)	–	–	–	1	5
Sling	–	1	30 ft.	1	2
Spear	1d6	1	20 ft.	10	1
Stones (20)	1d6	–	–	1	1

Rate of Fire is the number of projectiles than can be fired per combat round
† There is a +2 "to-hit" bonus for missile weapons utilized at short range (×1), a +1 "to-hit" bonus at medium range (×2), and no bonus or penalty for long range (×3) attacks

Table 11: Armor

Armor	Effect on AC [AAC]	Weight (lb.)*	Cost
Chain mail	-4 [+4]	50	30
Leather	-2 [+2]	25	15
Plate mail	-6 [+6]	75	50
Shield	-1 [+1]	10	10

At the Referee's discretion, magical armor weighs either half of its normal weight or nothing at all

Calculating Armor Class

To calculate a character's Armor Class, one must first determine which system is being used by the Referee. The two systems are explained below:

Descending AC System

In this system, an unarmored human has an AC of 9. The armor you buy lowers your AC and the lower the AC, the harder you are to hit. To calculate your Armor Class, look at the Armor table above, in the **Effect on AC** column. For whatever type of armor you bought, subtract the number shown from your base AC of 9. That's your new Armor Class.

Important
Your Referee will decide whether your game is using the "Descending" armor class system where a lower AC is harder to hit, or the "Ascending AC" system, where a higher AC is harder to hit. Numbers for the "Ascending AC" system are set off in brackets. ■

Table 8: Transportation

Type	Cost	Type	Cost
Armor, horse (barding)	320	Mule	20
Bags, saddle	10	Raft	40
Boat	100	Saddle	25
Cart	80	Ship, sailing (large)	20,000
Galley, large	30,000	Ship, sailing (small)	5,000
Galley, small	10,000	Wagon, small	160
Horse, draft	30	Warhorse, heavy	200
Horse, light riding	40	Warhorse, medium	100

Table 9: Melee Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Weight (lb.)	Cost
Axe, battle*	1d6+1	15	7
Axe, hand‡	1d6	5	3
Club	1d6	10	–
Dagger	1d6-1	2	3
Flail	1d6	15	8
Mace	1d6	10	5
Morning Star	1d6	15	6
Polearm (bardiche, halberd, etc.)*	1d6+1	15	7
Spear†‡	1d6	10	2
Staff*	1d6	10	1
Sword, long	1d6	10	10
Sword, short	1d6-1	5	8
Sword, two-handed	1d6+1	15	15
War Hammer	1d6	10	5

Two-handed weapon

† Can be used as either a one-handed or two-handed weapon

‡ Can be used as either a melee or missile weapon

Table 10: Missile Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Rate of Fire*	Range†	Weight (lb.)	Cost
Arrows (20)	–	–	–	1	5
Arrow, silver	–	–	–	1	5
Axe, hand	1d6	1	10 ft.	10	3
Bolt, crossbow (30)	–	–	–	5	5

Rate of Fire is the number of projectiles than can be fired per combat round

† There is a +2 "to-hit" bonus for missile weapons utilized at short range (×1), a +1 "to-hit" bonus at medium range (×2), and no bonus or penalty for long range (×3) attacks

Saving Throw: Elves get +2 when making saving throws vs. magic.

Languages: For campaigns that give each race its own dialect, Elves should be able to speak with gnolls, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins.

The Elf (*Variant*)

Some Referees may want to allow the Elf to advance as a blend of Fighter and Magic-user instead of switching back and forth. In that model, the following advancement table might be used instead. Aside from Character Advancement and Weapon and Armor Restrictions, Elven Race Abilities remain the same.

Table 6: Elf (*Variant*) Advancement

Level	Experience	Hit Dice (d6)	Saving Throw	Spells 1	2	3
1	0	1+1	14	–	–	–
2	5,000	2	13	1	–	–
3	10,000	2+1	12	2	–	–
4	20,000	3	11	2	1	–
5	40,000	3+1	10	3	2	–
6	80,000	4	9	4	2	–
7	160,000	4+1	8	4	2	1
8	320,000	5	7	4	2	2

Elven Race Abilities (*Variant*)

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: Elves would have the advantage of both magic and armor at the same time, so the Referee may limit the Elf to chain mail. Elves may not use two-handed weapons (two-handed sword, polearms, etc.) or shields while casting spells.

The Halfling

There are many types of Halflings which appear in literature. This group could include gnomes, pixies, fairies, small folk from the shire-land, or any other of the "wee folk" which the Referee will allow in his campaign.

Halfling Race Abilities

Character Advancement: The only character class available to Halflings is that of the Fighter, but are typically allowed to advance only as high as 4th level.

Weapon and Armor Restrictions: Like human Fighters, Halfling Fighters have been trained in warfare and have no weapon or armor restrictions.

Hard to Hit: Being small, Halflings are typically awarded some defensive bonus in combat—perhaps a +2 bonus against men-folk and +4 against giants.

Deadly Accuracy with Missiles: Halflings receive a +2 "to-hit" when firing missile weapons in combat.

Near Invisibility: When not engaged in combat, Halflings are hard to see and move with almost total silence.

Saving Throw: Halflings don't use magic and as such are somewhat immune to it—receiving +4 when making saving throws vs. magic. Since they are also such stout folk, Halflings also get +1 when making saving throws against death and poison.

Languages: For campaigns that give each race its own dialect, Halflings should be able to speak with creatures that fit the style of the Referee's campaign.

Alignment

There is no "official" alignment system for SWORDS & WIZARDRY: WHITEBOX. In some campaigns, the struggle between Law and Chaos is the only supernatural conflict, and Good and Evil are nothing more than personal preferences held by mortals. In other campaigns, it is the struggle between Good and Evil that defines where gods and mortals stand in the grand scheme of the universe.

If you're playing a game and want an "unofficial" default, then let the players choose one of three alignments: Law, Chaos, or Neutrality. The good guys are Lawful, the bad guys are Chaotic, and anyone just trying to achieve fame and fortune is Neutral.

Character Retirement

The Referee has the final say on how and when retirement works for the campaign. Some ignore retirement altogether and simply extrapolate the tables to include levels beyond those shown. Each group has their own play style and a preference for a given range of character levels for their games.
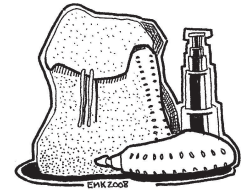
CHAPTER 4:
Items and Equipment

Each character starts with some gold pieces at the beginning of the game, used to buy equipment. One gold piece (gp) is worth 10 silver pieces (sp) or 100 copper pieces (cp). Prices for equipment are listed on the tables below in amount of gold pieces. The Referee is encouraged to include additional items and equipment as seen fit, while keeping prices relative to what's been given.

Equipment Weight

A "normal" level of miscellaneous equipment is assumed to weigh 10 pounds. If treasure is added to this, each coin and gem is assumed to weigh 0.1 pound.

Table 7: Adventuring Gear

Gear	Cost	Gear	Cost
Backpack (30 lb. capacity)	5	Oil (lamp), 1 pint	2
Bedroll	2	Pole, 10 ft.	1
Belladonna, bunch	10	Rations, trail (day)	1
Bottle (wine), glass	1	Rations, dried (day)	3
Case (map or scroll)	3	Rope (50 ft.), hemp	1
Crowbar	5	Rope (50 ft.), silk	5
Flint and Steel	5	Sack (15 lb. capacity)	1
Garlic (1 lb.)	10	Sack (30 lb. capacity)	2
Grappling Hook	5	Shovel	5
Hammer	2	Spellbook (blank)	100
Helmet	10	Spikes (12), iron	1
Holy Symbol, wooden	2	Stakes (12), wooden	1
Holy Symbol, silver	25	Tent	20
Holy Water, small vial	25	Torches (6)	1
Lantern	10	Waterskin	1
Mirror (small), steel	5	Wolfsbane, bunch	10