

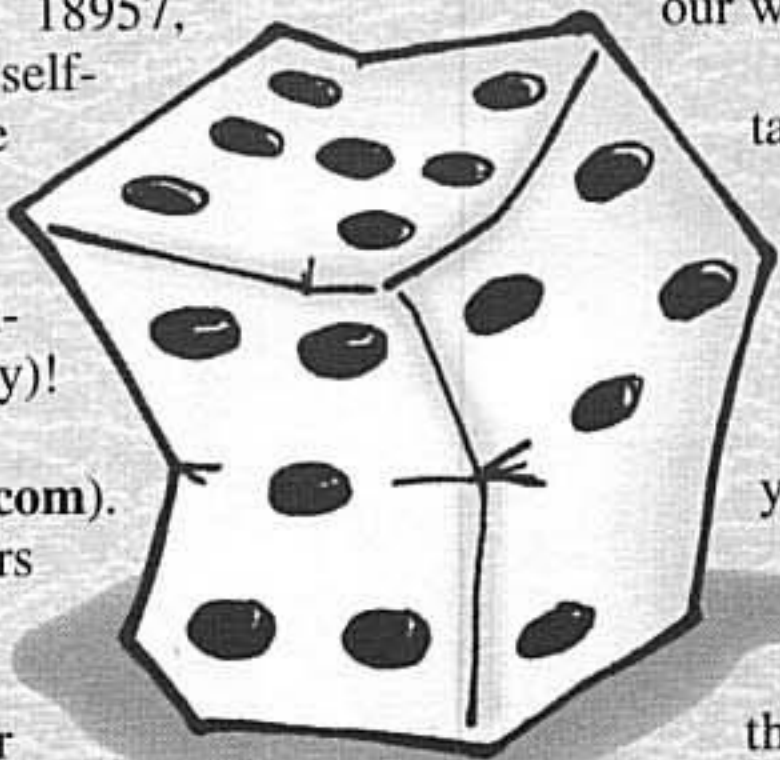
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About Steve Jackson Games

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *Munchkin d20*, except when we're disclaiming any responsibility for its existence. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us (putting a blank check inside the SASE is optional, but highly recommended if you want a speedy reply)! Resources include:

d20 Weekly (www.d20weekly.com). Our newest online magazine covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Spycraft*, *d20 Modern* – and, of course, *Munchkin d20*. It is your first, best source of news about all *d20* releases, with articles, editorials, and reviews. *d20 Weekly* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!



New supplements and adventures. SJ Games continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. Check out our website (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all releases, including this book, are available on our website.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. Gobs and gobs of munchkinly goodness can be found at www.sjgames.com/munchkin/.

INTRODUCTION



For far too long, fantasy roleplayers have tried to convince the rest of the world that they are interested in building a story, a “shared narrative experience,” and that they are not simply about killing monsters, looting the corpses, and making their PCs like unto gods. Recently, a new style of RPG has appeared . . . games which encourage the creation of an epic tale, rewarding the pure roleplaying experience and the ingenuity of those who share in its creation.

This is not one of those games.

The *Munchkin Player's Handbook* presents fantasy roleplaying distilled to its monster-slaying, treasure-grubbing, power-corrupting essence. No more tedious interaction with the long-lost prince of

the distant elven kingdom – hold him for ransom, or just off him and loot the corpse. No more intricate strategies for infiltrating the mountain stronghold of the bandit king – blast down the front gate and kill everyone in the way. Heck, just kill everyone! No more time-wasting royal parties – while all the nobles are (ugh) dancing, you have time to ransack the cloakroom.

In the end, all that matters is what fell beasties you kill, what sparkly trinkets you recover from their lairs, and – most important of all – how much experience you get. As the sages wrote in *The Munchkin's Guide to Power Gaming*: *If it's not about winning, why is it called a game?*

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Most important, you will need imagination. It will help you to visualize the world the GM has buried under a tsunami of adjectives and adverbs, in the process exhausting his thesaurus and half of the Latin-English dictionary he hadn't opened since the 11th grade. It will help you craft exciting combat scenes and exquisite prayers. Mostly, though, it will help you justify all the bonuses you've assigned your character, with reference to a history and family he didn't have until you started talking.

You will also need a character sheet (paper usually works well), a soft-lead pencil (for faster erasing of old stats as you level, and level, and level again), this book, the *Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook* (the authors would like to point out that its glossy cover makes for an excellent coaster), and dice. Buckets of dice. Scads and oodles and metric tons of dice. Many gamers are fanatical about their own dice, so you're unlikely to be able to scam dice from your friends after the first game or two. Next time you visit your parents, raid the *Monopoly* box. And *Yahtzee* . . . that's good for five at once . . .

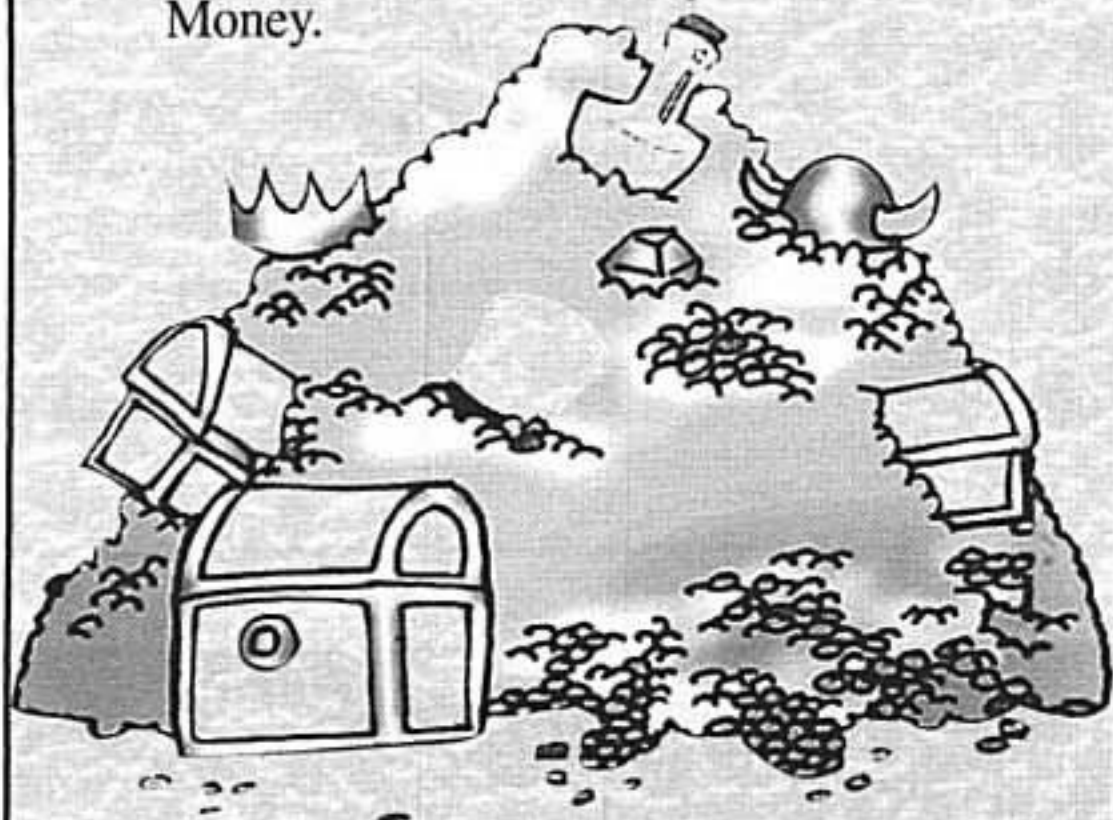
THE MUNCHKIN PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

With this book, munchkins can finally use the *d20* system to play the game they want to play. Shorn of all the irrelevancies of diplomacy, etiquette, and (ugh) court dances, the *d20* system is a perfect tool for gamers who want to get down to the nitty-gritty of killing monsters and taking their stuff. Here's an overview:

The **Introduction** is what you're reading now. If you haven't figured that out, put this book down and pick up a strategy guide to *Old Maid*.

Why d20?

Money.



No, Really. Why?

d20 games are compatible with the first and still most popular of the fantasy roleplaying games on the market. It only seems logical that, if one wishes to create a humorous – one might even say “parody,” especially if one's lawyers have strongly suggested the frequent use of the word – roleplaying game, that it use the system with which the most players are familiar. With the advent of the Open Gaming License (see www.opengamingfoundation.org for more details than anyone but a copyright attorney could possibly care about), this game system has opened up for all game companies to (ab)use in their own products. It all relates back to the theory of *network externalities*, you see.

“Network Externalities”? What the Heck Does *That* Mean?

Money.

Chapter 1 presents a discussion of munchkin ability scores – what they mean, how they’re used, and why we want them to be as high as possible. (Or higher. Be greedy.)

Chapter 2 lists the races available to PCs in *Munchkin d20*; for the most part, these are taken from the *Munchkin* card game, although some races are new here.

Chapter 3 lists the classes available to munchkin adventurers. While you may be familiar with other classes that go by the same names, rest assured that the classes in this book are most definitely the ones you have been looking for.

Chapter 4 has a selection of skills and feats that every munchkin should have. And some that no one should have.

Chapter 5 talks about the mundane stuff that gets in the way of true munchkinry, but which GMs insist on for arcane reasons of their own. Fortunately, it’s short.

Chapter 6 talks about equipment. Here’s where all the weapons are – a subject of true interest to every munchkin.

Chapter 7 contains a discussion of munchkin magic, both divine and arcane. If you think *wish* is at too high a level, this chapter is definitely for you.

About the Authors

Andrew Hackard is the Managing Editor of Steve Jackson Games and a munchkin of long standing. His roleplaying experience dates back two decades to *The Keep on the Borderlands*, in which he learned that *detect magic* is not the best choice for one’s sole first-level spell. When he is not making award-winning authors cry for their mommies or writing game supplements of dubious merit, Andrew can be found sitting at home in the dark, watching movies that everyone else saw five years ago.

Steve Jackson’s first roleplaying campaign involved three little books in a cardboard box,

and a DM who didn’t really understand the encounter tables OR the combat system, but thought *cloudkill* was cool. His party wandered through the wilderness, encountering one bandit group after another, smothering them in choking death and taking their stuff. No later campaign has quite measured up. More recently, he is the designer of *Munchkin*, the card game on which this series of supplements is based. Despite this, his membership in the Academy of Adventure Game Design’s Hall of Fame has not been revoked . . . yet.

CHAPTER ONE

ABILITIES

All of this chapter is Open Content.

A *Munchkin d20* PC has six ability scores, which typically range from 3-18 but can go much higher – and should, at the first available opportunity. (Some races have bonuses which allow some initial scores to be higher than 18. They *rock*.) Three abilities – Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution – are physical traits, and the other three – Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma – are mental.



YOUR ABILITY SCORES

Each of the six ability scores describes a different facet of your character. Every character class is associated with one of these scores – its “prime requisite” – and it is usually good for that score to be the highest of the six. Of course, *all* scores should be as high as possible . . .

STRENGTH (STR)

Strength is the measure of raw physical power. It controls how well your hero can attack monsters and how hard he hits them when he succeeds. Obviously, it is very important for STR to be as high as possible. Strength also is the key ability for

several skill checks, and is used when your PC needs to throw or break something. Strength gets used a lot.

DEXTERITY (DEX)

Heroes use Dexterity to wiggle out of tough situations, slip out of bindings when the GM decides to capture them, and dodge the whirling blades of the bad guys. Thieves use Dexterity to slither through narrow openings, disarm intricate traps on locked chests containing stuff that shortly will belong to them, and dodge the whirling blades of the good guys, including the rest of their own party. For all these reasons, it is important for Dexterity to be as high as possible. Reflex saving throws are modified by Dexterity. Dexterity gets used a lot.

CONSTITUTION (CON)

Constitution describes physical hardiness and ability to withstand infection, illness, and sudden-onset steel poisoning. With a high Constitution, a PC gets bonus hit points. With a low Constitution, a PC has to take a hit point penalty. The math is obvious . . . it is important for Constitution to be as high as possible.

Characters also use Constitution to help with physical endurance (running, swimming, staying up all night and all the next day rolling dice). Spellcasters use Constitution to allow them to ignore pain and continue hurling *fireballs* at the helpless goblins down the passageway. Fighters use Constitution to allow them to ignore *fireballs* and continue hurling goblins down the passageway. Fortitude saving throws are modified by Constitution. Constitution gets used a lot.

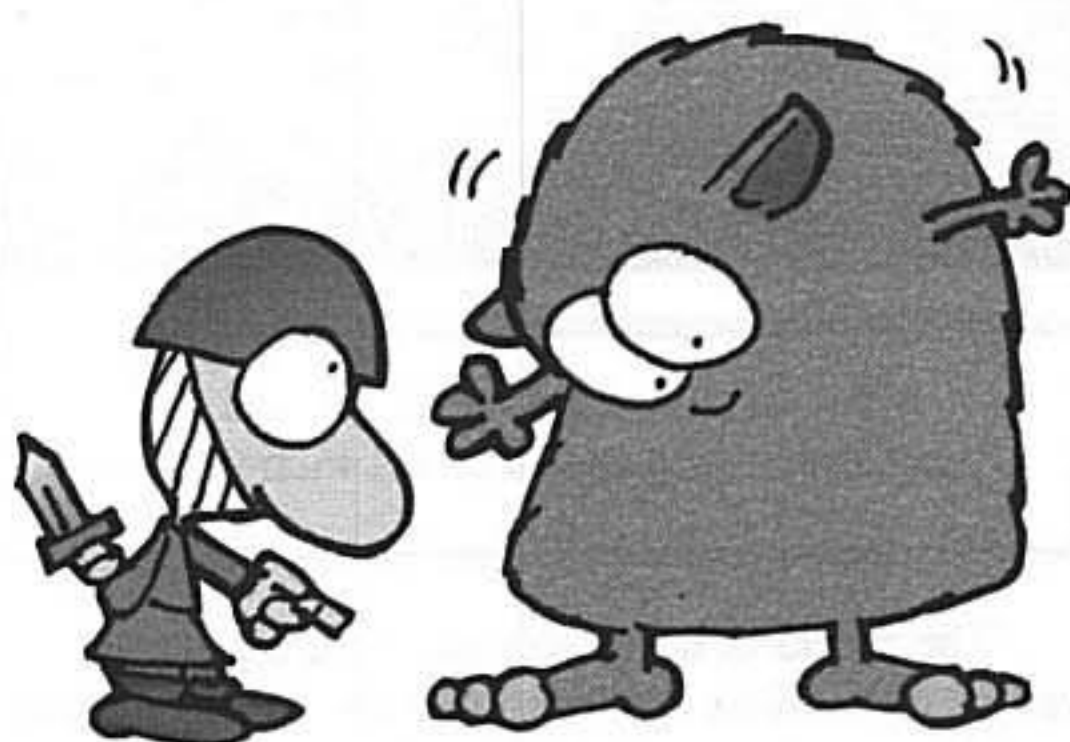
INTELLIGENCE (INT)

Intelligence is book learning and raw brainpower. Characters with high Intelligence can speak more languages, pick up skills more quickly, and don't have to have the DM repeat the boxed text. (Wait, that last one refers to the players . . . oh, skip it. We've never yet seen a dumb player who could play a smart character. The reverse is not at all true, however.) It is important for Intelligence to be as high as possible – even a fighter needs some skill points. Wizards also use Intelligence to control how many spells they receive and how quickly they receive them. Intelligence gets used a lot.

WISDOM (WIS)

Wisdom describes native cunning, willpower, and intuition – all the things which factor into “brainpower” but can't be learned in books. People with high Wisdom scores get a bonus to their Will saves. High Wisdom also increases the acuity of your senses, as you seem to know where to look or listen almost before there's anything there to see or hear. Finally, divine power manifests as received wisdom, so clerics use this ability to determine what bonus spells they get, and what spell levels they can use. Of course, it's often difficult to distinguish ineffable wisdom from the ravings of a dun-derhead, so don't dismiss a street beggar just because he sounds addleheaded. He's probably a

20th-level Zen monk who understands that it is important for Wisdom to be as high as possible and is about to unleash divine thunder on your butt. Wisdom gets used a lot.



Monsters (and characters) with low Wisdom scores will fall for anything.

CHARISMA (CHA)

A character's charisma determines both looks and personality – all the things that attract others . . . or repel them. Any attempts to influence others are modified by Charisma, and this ability governs a bard's spell selection and rate of progress. Many other bardic powers are aided by Charisma (just ask the Backstreet Boys and Britney Spears). Additionally, clerics' ability to turn or command undead is influenced by Charisma – apparently undead are repelled by cuteness. Charisma gets used . . . almost never, in a true *Munchkin* game. Them's the breaks. If your GM insists that you should have a low score, this is probably the one you want to assign (at least while you search for a more pliable GM). No one ever slaughtered a room full of icky nasties with a charming personality, and “looks to die for” is, we hate to tell you, just a figure of speech.

Nevertheless, if you wind up with a high Charisma, all is not lost. You can, of course, be a bard. You can also take every opportunity to “use your Charisma” by rolling to impress every shopkeeper, barmaid, and slaving foe that you meet. “Give me a break on the price. Serve me loyally. Here's my room key.” A high enough Charisma *can* be abused. Have fun.

MORE! MOOOOOOOOOORE!

We can't emphasize enough the importance of changing your ability scores . . . upward, ever upward. These are the very basis of your character . . . in their own way, just as important as acquiring the Armor of Foe Repulsion and the Sword of Slaying Everything But Squid . . . and you should never miss a chance for a permanent improvement. A good eraser and a soft pencil should be part of every player's arsenal.

CHAPTER TWO

RACES

Most of this chapter is Closed Content. Open Content appears in boxes such as this one.

The world is home to many intelligent races, as well as orcs. Most of these races have been around a long time, to the astonishment of draconic observers. The distinction between a “civilized” race and a “target” is sometimes fuzzy, and adventurers are advised to keep the following questions in mind:

1. Are there any of this race in my adventuring group?

2. Did a member of this race fund my current expedition?

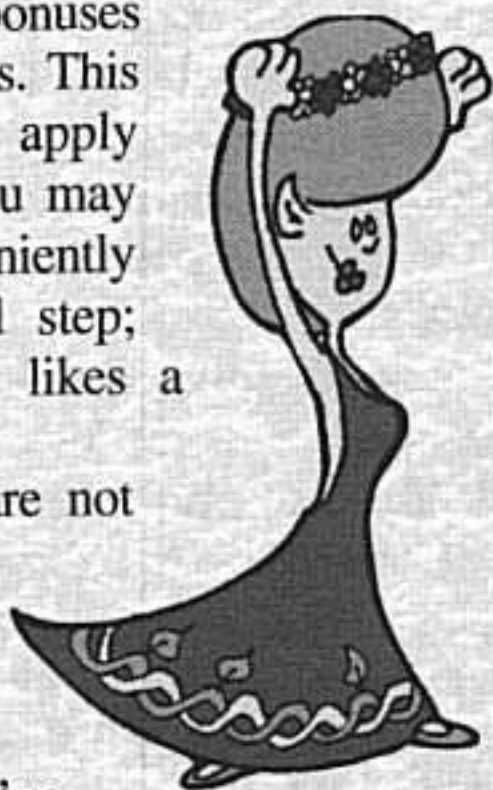
3. Are they putting up any resistance?

If the answers to all three of these questions is “no,” hack and slash with a clear conscience. Even if only one answer is “yes,” you’re probably in the clear . . . as long as you can come up with a good story.

This Is Not Your Daddy's Elf

Most races apply bonuses to certain ability scores. This is good. Most races apply penalties to others. You may be forgiven for conveniently forgetting this second step; remember, everybody likes a positive attitude.

Note that these are not the same races as found in *Certain Other Books*. Nay, not even close. These are *much* more fun. We’ve done studies.



established ways of life and attempting to remold them in the humans’ image of how they think the race in question lives, as distinct – dramatically so – from how they actually *do*. It’s all good-hearted and generally well-intentioned, which only makes it more annoying to those who have to either put with the humans’ interference or kill them.

The human lifespan is short – averaging around 50 years, with exceptionally old individuals reaching 70 or 80 – and so the race’s historical perspective is somewhat lacking. On the other hand, this reduced lifespan gives most humans a sense of urgency in what they do, and humankind has made stunning advances in the fields of killing things faster and killing them in greater quantities. Humans also tend to have more flexibility in their attitudes about whom to kill, and a remarkable ability to learn new ways to kill things.

As a fairly young race, humanity doesn’t have the ancient alliances or enmities that characterize relations among some of the other races. Accordingly, any sort of negotiation or interaction involving a human kingdom tends to be unpredictable, as the human element adds a sort of “wild card” to the proceedings. Many other races have described the interplay among human nations as the bickering of children on a grand scale. The humans, for their part, think of the older races as uncles and aunts who make them eat vegetables and give them woolen drawers for birthdays. Many of these older races fear what might happen if these “children” ever grow up . . . and dream of ways to, metaphorically, smother them in their cradles. Or maybe not so metaphorically.



The average human.

HUMANS

This is the “default” choice in *Munchkin*. Humans make up most of the population – largely because they breed faster than any other race except orcs, and humans aren’t usually hunted by roaming bands of adventurers. Many humans, recognizing that they are becoming the dominant race in many lands, have taken it upon themselves to “understand” other cultures, the better to “preserve” them. This usually translates as inept humans bumbling into well-

ROLEPLAYING HUMANS

Be yourself (assuming that in the mundane world you are actually human, rather than a dolphin, Labrador retriever, or professional wrestler). Look around you. Realize that humans have custody of the world, and make sure that people of all other races realize that you respect their quaint little customs and charming quirks, even as you are blessedly free of them yourself. It is a terrible but thrilling task to shoulder the human’s burden in this world.

"I don't have anything against the other races, really; I'm just glad they mostly keep to themselves. Dwarves aren't any fun, but they make wonderful weapons. Elves are kinda stuffy, but once you get 'em drinkin', they tell the most amazing stories about things they supposedly saw. Gnomes are a lot of fun to be around, but don't ever trust anything you see, and feel your chair before sitting down to dinner. (And always, always carry a spare hanky when you're traveling with a gnome.) Halflings are sorta cute, but really they belong in carnivals with the bearded ladies – hey, I bet those are dwarves! – and the fire-eaters, and not out in public where they might get stepped on. And orcs . . . ugh. I swear, the last time an orc took a bath, it must have drowned. I once knew an orc who was so stupid that he – what was that? Your mother's mother was an orc? That explains the nose, then – urk!"

– Last words of Sallin Dullwit,

disturbingly proficient – almost as bad as orcs, though slightly more prone to bathe.

Gnomes think of humanity as one big mark, ripe to be fleeced. They tend to mingle freely in human cities, selling off technological wares and playing all manner of practical jokes. Gnomes also, inexplicably, like to stand immobile in human gardens for hours, even days at a time. Humans provide an unending series of gullible fools for them to exploit.

Halflings, of all the races, seem to have the best relationship with humanity. This may be because humans tend to stick up for their "little friends," but most likely it has more to do with the human invention of the all-night diner. Halfling pipeweed merchants get along very well with human wizards, for whom smoking a pipe is almost a job requirement. Many humans also keep a looser grip on their purses than they really ought to, which delights many halflings to no end.

Orcs think humans tasty. Go good with beer. Human women very pretty.