

Volley Rounds

How many rounds before mêlée?

Arctic, desert,	
farmland, or grassland	6d6/6
Forest, swamp, or woodland	2d8/6
Hills, or wasteland	2d10/6
Jungle	2d6/6
Mountains	4d10/6
Dungeon	always 1

Round down!
(Can get zero)

The rounds tick down as long as **at least one side** wants to close in, and if there are no ravines or similar in the way.

Ranged Attacks

...can reach on the **last two volley rounds**, or up to two escape points. **Two-handed ranged** weapons reach up to ten (at disadvantage until the last two).

Spells with a range of at least 300 feet: range/60 ←round up (Without disadv.)

Usually there is no chase and only a single volley round.

Chases

Compare speeds (spending actions and bonus actions on speed first—if people hesitate, have them commit and reveal secretly). Escaper more than pursuer? Add one escape point. Pursuer more than escaper? Remove one escape point. A tie? Neither add nor remove escape points.

Separate pools for each escaper/pursuer pair. **Make attacks** if you have actions left. That's how you catch them! You need ranged attacks if there are escape points.

Escaper can roll to hide from those with at least one escape point on them. Once an escaper has hidden from a pursuer, **that's it!** That pursuer has lost that escaper. See DMG p 253 for ideas for hiding adv&disadv and complications.

If there are still pursuers, start a new round of compare→attack→hide.

Dashing 3+con times is fine. Beyond that you need to make DC 10 constitution checks or rack up temporary exhaustion.

Ranks

Front rank

- Shoots at disadv
- Can be in mêlée groups
- Can be shot

Back rank

- Can shoot
- Can't be in mêlée groups
- Can be shot

Free Air

- Can shoot
- Can be only in air mêlée groups
- Can be shot

The "Speed" number can take terrain, conditions, encumbrance etc into account even when we're not tracking exact positions.

Guarded

- If there are less than two monsters per hero and either
- At least **two** front rank heroes guarding you, or
- At least **three** front rank heroes for **each** monster.

To be in the back rank, you need to be **guarded**, or able to **Levitate** or similar ability, or be in a safe or unseen place.

*The guards decide who they protect if there's an argument. **Conjured** creatures can't be guards. You also can't guard against **swarms** or **incorporeal movement**.*

To be in the free air, you need a flying speed. You can go down to normal front rank by flying low.

No Initiative Rolls

Just let everyone get an action every round. Holding **light**, or being in the same mêlée group as an ally with light, lets you strike before than your foe. If the light situation is equal, the side that didn't start the fight can strike first.

Mêlée Groups

A fancy word for standing next to someone. Fights start with everyone unengaged. **Join a mêlée group with an enemy in order to make mêlée attacks on them.** And monsters do the same to hit you. Multiple people can join the same mêlée group.

Targets in AoE

How many?

x/5, cone/10, line/30 ← **round up**
So a fireball (20' radius) hits 4 targets.

Where?

If you target someone in a mêlée group, you need to target everyone in that group before selecting more targets outside that group.

"Reach Attack"

If you are unengaged and have longer mêlée reach than your target, you can make "reach attacks" against enemies without having to join their mêlée group (even if one or both of you are in the back rank).

Movement

You can always **switch ranks** unless you're restrained or grappled, but to **change mêlée group**, you need to **move**.

Speed 1'–24': you are slow. You can move into one group if you're unengaged, *or* move out of one group.

Speed 25' or more: you are fast. You can move in and out of any amount of groups.

You can use your reaction to make an opportunity attack on enemies in your mêlée group (or the enemy last you hit with a "reach attack") if they move away from you without disengaging; "moving away" means moving anywhere except into your group.

Fighter
 Barbarian
 Paladin
 Cleric
 Ranger
 Multiclass
 Bard
 Druid
 Sorcerer
 Warlock
 Wizard
 Monk
 Rogue

Example: six heroes vs a wight and three skeletons!

Square grid, dotted, or lined paper all work great! But use pencil so you can erase dots and Xs.

X means *mêlée* group. In this example, Mike and Wendy are both unengaged, Cecilia is in a *mêlée* group with one skeleton, Terry in one with another, and then there's a big group with Felix, Doris, the wight and a skeleton.

As you leave a group,
erase your Xs (and take
opportunity attacks
from them).

When you join a group, get an X with every enemy in that group (copy the Xs your allies in that group have).

In a chase write the number of escape points instead of Xs, and (unlike *mêlée* Xs) don't keep the rows in sync; allow each pursuer/escaper pair to be independent.

Conflict dots!

C for **c**ommon sense around **c**oncentration,
conjunctions and other **c**onsiderations, such as
Armor of Agathys.

O for oh-no-you-didn't. Normal and extra attacks and cantrips are fine, but if you use slotted spells, Sneak Attack, Action Surge etc and manage to deal any damage, you get a mark here that remains until the fight is over.

N for **kn**ocked down or other things that lets the monsters gain advantage or avoid disadvantage.

F for front rank.

L for light.

Monster columns! I usually use the starting HP to identify them but you can also jot down a name or initial. I like counting **up** the damage the monsters have taken until the damage reaches that starting HP. Jot down status effects like Vicious Mockery or conditions in these columns too.

Heroes are listed in class order;
monsters are the most dangerous on the
left to more minion types on the right.

I go through the mêlée groups from right to left; resolving actions in one group (both heroes and monsters) before going to the next. And lastly any unengaged combatants on either side.

In the example, a skeleton will hit Terry, Terry can act back, then Felix and Doris (they have light) and then their skeleton and wight, and and then Cecilia (she has light) and then her skeleton, and finally Mike and Wendy.

Limit on Rank

Monsters don't need to be *guarded* to be back rank, but they can only be back rank if there is at least one front rank monster for every front rank hero. In addition, front rank monsters that have a mêlée attack are not allowed, even at disad, to use ranged attacks.

Limit on Ganging Up

Multiple monsters can't join a mêlée group until all groups have one monster per hero. Once that is so, the next limit is three monsters per hero, then eight, then no limit. So 9,3,3,3 is bad, it'd have to be 8,4,3,3. A group with two heroes and two monsters satisfy the one-monster-per-hero requirement and then the monsters in that group are free to attack the same hero. Ranged attacks can be aimed at anyone, so it's often better to leave monsters in the back rank to shoot.

Limit on target order—C↓O↑N↓

The heroes are listed in the starting target order (it's not a turn order). **It is the DM's job** to make sure that the heroes at the top of the target order get the most (and the most dangerous) attackers, **given the limits** on rank and ganging up. Dots in the CON columns make the heroes count earlier when determining this order. First, C dots are read top down, O dots are next and are read from the bottom up, then N dots top down, and lastly those without any CON dots. C dots (unlike O or N) require common sense and could mean either most or least desirable target.

Example

In the example, the order is Wendy, Doris, Mike, Felix, Cecilia, then Terry. This complex situation has gradually built over six rounds.

Mike and Wendy are in the back rank, and the limit on rank makes the undead all be front rank and unable to shoot them.

Doris and Felix are in a group that already has one enemy per hero; the limit on ganging up means the other two skeletons can't join that group unless someone took their place fighting Cecilia and Terry.

So the wight, being the most dangerous, attacks Doris. The skeleton in the same group also attacks Doris, while the last two skeletons attack Cecilia and Terry.