



THE TONGUE OF DICE

READING THE NUMBERS AT ANY TABLE

DND DICE ROLLER

Four symbols, one instruction. Learn to read them once and you will never again be the player who asks what to roll.

ZERATUL

Dark Templar Prelate of the Nerazim
Master of the Warp Blade, Voidwalker

His eyes, a pair of piercing jade light beneath his cowl. His hands, clad in ancient bronze
armors, wield a radiant green Warp Blade, powered by the very void. Dark, praetorian
weapon and ornate gold plating shield him as he traverses the path of exile. The white

THE TONGUE OF DICE

YOU HAVE SEEN IT ON A SPELL SCROLL, CARVED INTO A monster's plinth, scratched in the margin of somebody's house rule: **1d20 + 5**. Four symbols and a promise. Everyone else at the table reads it without pausing, the way you read a road sign. This is how they do it.

Dice notation says how many dice to roll, what kind, and what happens to the result. It is terse on purpose — it has to be spoken across a table in one breath, over five people arguing about a door.

THE CORE FORMULA

Every roll is built on the same three characters, in the same order.

XdY

- X** How many dice to roll. Leave it off entirely and it means one.
- d** Short for *die*. The only letter in the whole system.
- Y** How many sides each of those dice has.

So **1d6** is one six-sided die, **2d8** is two eight-sided dice added together, and **d20** and **1d20** say exactly the same thing.

That is the entire grammar. Everything after this is a modifier hung off it.

THE DICE AT A GLANCE

Seven dice sit in a standard set, and each has a job it does more than any other. You learn them by touch long before you learn them by name.

THE STANDARD SET

Die	Sides	Where you meet it
d4	four	dagger damage, healing potions, caltrops
d6	six	shortsword, sneak attack, ability scores
d8	eight	longsword, most hit dice, <i>cure wounds</i>
d10	ten	heavy crossbow, half a percentile roll
d12	twelve	greataxe, barbarian hit dice
d20	twenty	every attack, save, and check
d100	percentile	wild magic, loot tables, fate

ADDING MODIFIERS



Most rolls carry a modifier — a flat number applied *after* the dice have spoken, never before.

Roll first. Then add. The dice decide the outcome. The modifier only adjusts it.

- 1d20 + 5** You roll a 14. Your result is **19**.
- 2d6 + 3** The dice come up 4 and 2. Your result is **9**.
- 1d8 - 1** You roll a 6. Your result is **5**.

The order matters more than it sounds. A player who adds first and rolls second will eventually argue that a natural 20 was really a 15, and nobody wants to be at that table.

TOTAL, OR EACH DIE?

Some tools — DnD Dice Roller among them — will let you apply a modifier to the **total** or to **each die**. Two readings of the same eight characters, and they do not agree.

THE SAME NOTATION, TWO ANSWERS

2d6 + 3 applied to the total: roll 4 and 2, add 3 once. **Nine.**

2d6 + 3 applied to each die: roll 4 and 2, add 3 twice. **Twelve.**

Read the spell text carefully. Almost every effect in fifth edition modifies the total — but the handful that do not are, without exception, the ones that end fights.

KEEP, DROP, AND REROLL

Past the basic form, notation starts picking up instructions — little suffixes that tell you what to do with the dice once they have landed. Four of them cover almost everything you will meet in play.



4d6d11 Roll four six-sided dice, **drop the lowest**, keep the rest. The classic ability-score method. It drags the average up to 12.24 — which is why your first-level fighter feels heroic and a straight **3d6** character feels like somebody's unlucky cousin.

2d20kh1

Roll two twenty-sided dice, **keep the highest**. This is *advantage*, and it is worth roughly +3.3 on the average roll — bigger than any proficiency bonus you will ever have.

2d20k11

Roll two, **keep the lowest**. This is *disadvantage*, and it costs you exactly what advantage gives.

6x4d6d11

Do **4d6d11** six times over. An entire character's ability scores in nine characters of notation.

That last line is the point of the whole system. Nine characters, spoken in one breath, and everyone at the table knows precisely what is about to happen.

A CREATURE TO PRACTISE ON

Every number on a stat block is notation, including the ones that do not look like it. Read this one and you can read any of them.

GOBLIN

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (leather armor, shield)

Hit Points 7 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Its hit points are **2d6** — the goblin in front of you might have two, might have twelve, and the 7 in brackets is only the average the designer wrote down so a busy DM does not have to roll. Its scimitar does **1d6+2**. That **+2** is its Dexterity modifier, the same one sitting in the table above.

THE WHOLE LANGUAGE

Everything in this booklet, on one page. Tear it out and put it under the plexiglass on your side of the screen.

QUICK REFERENCE

You see	You do
d20	roll one twenty-sided die
3d8	roll three eight-sided dice, add them
1d20+5	roll a d20, add 5 to the total
2d6+3	roll two d6, add 3 to the total
4d6d11	roll four d6, drop the lowest
2d20kh1	roll two d20, keep the highest — <i>advantage</i>
2d20kl1	roll two d20, keep the lowest — <i>disadvantage</i>
1d100	roll percentile
6x4d6d11	six times over — a full ability array

TRY IT

Type any line from that table straight into the roller at **dnddiceroller.com**. It reads the notation back to you, rolls it, and shows every die that landed — not just the total.

THREE THINGS WORTH KNOWING

AVERAGES ARE WRITTEN DOWN FOR YOU

Where a stat block says 7 (**2d6**), the 7 is the average. Roll it or take it; both are correct, and taking it is faster when you have eleven goblins.

ADVANTAGE DOES NOT STACK

Two sources of advantage are still **2d20kh1**. Three are as well. And one source of each cancels out entirely — you roll one plain **d20**, no matter how many of each you have collected.

PERCENTILE IS TWO DICE

d100 is normally rolled as two ten-siders: one reads the tens, one reads the ones. A 4 and a 7 is 47. Two zeroes is 100, not nothing.

One Last Rule If you cannot remember any of this, say the numbers out loud. *“Two six-sided, plus three.”* Dice notation was written down to be spoken, and every table you will ever sit at already knows the sound of it.



DND DICE ROLLER

ROLL WITH US

dnddiceroller.com is the free roller that remembers your lists, follows you from laptop to phone, and never asks you to install anything. Six thousand of you a day can't be wrong. Well, you can, but the dice aren't.

UNCURSE YOUR DICE

Convinced your d20 hates you? **True Randomness** cuts every roll from a signed public pulse published by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology, and shows you which one. Blame physics, not the dice. Find it under **Unlock**.

FIND YOUR PEOPLE

The **Directory** at dnddiceroller.com/directory lists 59 dice makers, map artists, rules tools and table gear we'd actually use. Sell something for the table? Get listed.

TAKE IT TO THE PUB

Legend Roller puts the same roller in your pocket, iOS and Android, with profiles for every character you've ever loved and lost.