

# D&D Playtest: DM Guidelines

*As the Dungeon Master, you should familiarize yourself with the “How to Play” document, as well as this document. Here you’ll find guidance as well as DM-specific rules useful for running the game.*

In D&D, a Dungeon Master must take a number of roles, all at the same time. A DM serves as a referee, interpreting the rules and resolving any conflicts that arise because of them. The DM builds the world, creates adventures, and places monsters and treasure. The DM serves as the characters’ eyes and ears, describing what the characters can see and hear to the players.

The first rule of being a good DM is to remember that the rules are a tool that you and the players use to have a good time. The rules aren’t in charge. You, the DM, are the one in charge of the game. Guide the play experience and the use of the rules so that as many of your players have a good time as possible. There will be setbacks, such as a character being slain by an unlucky die roll, but look for ways to turn setbacks into interesting complications in the game’s story.

The second rule is to remember that the DM’s power comes with responsibility. Be fair and impartial with the players. Don’t force your story upon them or give them a game where their choices don’t matter. By the same token, challenge their characters with deadly monsters, fiendish traps, and vexing puzzles. A good DM is no pushover, but a good DM is also never simply out to slaughter the characters.

## DM Basics

The rules for checks, saving throws, and attacks form the basis of D&D. As a DM, your most important responsibility when it comes to these rules is determining how to use them and, just as important, when to use them.

## When to Use the Dice

When a player wants to take an action, it’s often appropriate to just let the action succeed. A character doesn’t normally need to make a Dexterity check to walk across an empty room, or a Charisma check to order a mug of ale in a tavern.

Only call for a roll if you think it’s worth taking the time for the rules to come into the flow of the game. Ask yourself two questions to aid your decision.

*Is the action being taken so easy, so free of stress or conflict, or so appropriate to the situation that there should be no chance of failure?* “So easy” should take into account the ability score associated with the intended action. It’s easy for someone with a Strength of 18 to flip over a table, though not easy for someone with a Strength of 9.

*Is the action being taken so inappropriate or impossible that it would never work?* Hitting the moon with an arrow is, for instance, impossible in most any circumstance.

If the answer to both of these questions is no, a check is called for.

## Checks

If a character attempts an action that has a significant chance of failure, require the player to make a check. A check is a test to see if a character succeeds.

Checks are the most commonly used mechanic in the game. Attacks and saving throws are, in essence, specialized forms of checks.

When in doubt, call for a check.

## Contests

A contest is a kind of check that matches two creatures against each other. Use a contest if a character attempts an action that either directly foils or is directly opposed by another creature’s actions.

When you call for a contest, you pick the ability that each side must use. In most contests, both sides use the same ability, but that is not always the case. For example, when a creature tries to hide, it engages in a contest of Dexterity against Wisdom. But if two creatures arm wrestle, or if one creature is holding a door closed against another’s attempt to push it open, both would probably use Strength.

When you call for a contest, keep in mind what’s at stake. What are the intentions of each side? Use that intent to determine which abilities are involved in the contest and the consequences of the contest.

Call for a contest when . . .

- a character wants to do something that another creature could prevent with an action of its own.

- success requires a character to overcome another creature.
- two creatures attempt the same thing at the same time, and only one can succeed.

## Saving Throws

Saving throws are quick reactions, rolls made in response to someone else's actions or some event. You can think of a saving throw as a reactive check.

A saving throw makes the most sense when something bad happens to a character and the character has a chance to avoid that effect.

Call for a saving throw when . . .

- a character's armor is of no use in avoiding an attack.
- an attacker's skill has no bearing on the outcome of an attack.
- an effect requires a character to make an effort to resist something when it is not that character's turn.

A check is something a character actively attempts to accomplish, whereas a saving throw is usually a split-second response to something.

## Attacks

An attack is perhaps the easiest rule to resolve. In essence, an attack is a check to see if one character can hit the other with a weapon or a spell. The DC for an attack is the target's Armor Class.

Call for an attack when a character tries to hit another creature with a physical or a magical attack, and the target's armor or shield could foil that attempt.

## Setting DCs

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For a DM, assigning Difficulty Classes is a cornerstone of the game. A DC is the measure of a task's difficulty. Setting a DC boils down to picking an ability for a task and then assigning the target number for the task's check.

### Pick an Ability

When picking the ability that a character must use for a check, keep in mind that each of the six abilities lines up with a general category of action.

**Strength** applies to any action that relies on brute force and physical power.

**Dexterity** applies in cases requiring physical finesse and agility.

**Constitution** comes into play in situations requiring physical resilience and fortitude.

**Intelligence** applies when a character needs to draw on logic, education, and deductive reasoning.

**Wisdom** covers situations that call for perception and intuition.

**Charisma** applies in situations that require social skills and the ability to influence others.

## Assign a DC

A Difficulty Class is a numerical rating that measures a task's difficulty. The higher the DC, the more difficult the task. As a DM, it is up to you to set most DCs. In some cases, such as a character's special ability or a task in a published adventure, a DC is provided for you.

**Trivial (DC 10 or Lower):** In normal circumstances, a DC of 10 or lower represents a task that is so easy that it is not worth a check. An adventurer can almost always succeed automatically on a trivial task.

**Moderate (DC 11-14):** A moderate task requires some minimum level of competence to accomplish. For example, treading water in rough conditions, climbing a typical dungeon wall, walking across an icy floor, breaking open a stuck wooden door, trying to communicate a simple idea to a creature that doesn't share your language, or picking a cheap lock.

**Advanced (DC 15-18):** An advanced task requires some amount of expertise or assistance to accomplish. Climbing a dungeon wall with few handholds, identifying an uncommon monster, and trying to befriend someone who doesn't like you are all examples of moderately difficult tasks.

**Extreme (DC 19-22):** Extreme tasks include any effort that is beyond the capabilities of most people without aid or exceptional ability. Such tasks include battering down a heavy wooden door that is locked, swimming in stormy waters, ascending a sheer surface with scant handholds, balancing on a very narrow ledge, or picking a typical lock.

**Master (DC 23-26):** Only especially talented individuals need even try their hand at tasks with DCs of 23 or higher. Examples include identifying especially rare monsters, recalling esoteric information known only to a few, physically powering out of manacles, climbing an oiled rope, or disarming a dwarven trap.

**Immortal (DC 27 and Higher):** Tasks of immortal difficulty are so challenging that only demigods and their peers can succeed without assistance.

## Options for Checks

These three options apply only to checks.

**Hazards:** Is there a chance that failing the task might lead to a disastrous outcome for the character? If so, consider assigning a hazard to the check.

If a character fails a check, and the total of the check is at least 10 less than the DC, the character suffers the hazard's effects.

For example, a character who fails a check to climb a wall of ice might fall.

**Ability Thresholds:** Sometimes a task is difficult for one character but trivial for another. For example, a large boulder blocks the entrance to a dungeon. A weakling rogue might have almost no chance of moving it, while a hulking fighter might push it aside with ease.

When assigning a DC to a check, you can decide that anyone with a particular ability score or higher automatically succeeds on that check. This rule is useful for tasks that don't usually rely on luck, such as lifting a heavy object, recalling a piece of common lore, and the like. As a rule of thumb, the minimum ability score should be 5 higher than the normal DC. Thus, a DC 11 task is an automatic success if a character's relevant ability score is 16 or higher.

**Requirements:** A check might require a specific tool, and the training needed to use that tool, to complete it. For example, you need thieves' tools to have any chance of picking most locks, or bandages to tend to a badly wounded comrade.

A character who cannot meet the requirements for a check automatically fails. One who meets them can attempt a check as normal.

A character might be able to improvise something to replace a requirement. For example, lacking bandages, a cleric might tear strips from his tabard to bandage a gravely injured wizard.

Use common sense to apply this rule. When in doubt, waive the requirement. Apart from special items such as thieves' tools, an alchemist's kit, and bandages, this step should come up only rarely.

## Engaging the Players

As a DM, you could memorize these guidelines, apply them flawlessly, and still miss out on the point of D&D. Unlike other games, D&D is a flexible set of guidelines, not a rigid set of laws.

When you ask a player to make a check, an attack, or a saving throw, you first should focus on engaging the players' imaginations. Describe the

scene to them, and pull in details such as sights, sounds, and even smells to make the action vivid.

More important, you want the players to become fully engaged in the game. Reward inventive players who look beyond game options to describe their characters' actions. Roleplaying games stand out from other types of games because they allow for this type of creativity. Encourage it whenever you can.

The easiest way to do so is to make imaginative solutions the easiest path to success for the adventurers. Consider the following options.

**Checks:** When a player makes a check, invite him or her to describe the character's action. If the player makes clever use of the situation in the description, consider either granting an automatic success or advantage on the check.

**Contests:** In a contest, an ingenious description that points to a key advantage that a character might gain could lead you to grant the character advantage on the check.

**Attacks and Saving Throws:** A colorful description is nice for attacks and saving throws, but should rarely be the avenue to gaining a concrete game benefit, as it is too easy to abuse such an approach. You might have players endlessly describing how they resist a mind flayer's *mind blast* or trying to narrate every detail of a sword blow. In most cases, spells and special abilities serve to grant characters advantage on their attacks and saving throws.

That said, if you feel the situation warrants it, use advantage to grant a character a well-earned edge.

**Disadvantage:** Not every idea is a good one. A character might try to win the prince's favor by bragging about all the bandits he slew, not realizing that the prince is an avowed pacifist. If an idea backfires on a player, apply disadvantage to the check or attack.

## Ignoring the Dice

If you're an experienced gamer, you have seen the following situation happen before. Rachel, playing her halfling cleric, delivers a perfect speech rallying the barbarian tribes to aid a besieged city. When she's done, everyone erupts in spontaneous applause. When she rolls her Charisma check, though, the die comes up a natural 1 and points to failure.

As a DM, remember that the dice are like the rules. They're a tool to help keep the action moving. At any time, you can decide that a player's action is automatically successful, even if the DC would

normally be somewhere above 20. By the same token, a bad plan or unfortunate circumstances can transform even the easiest task into an impossibility.

The dice are neutral arbiters. They come into play when success and failure are far from clear. Think of them as impartial judges, ready to dispense a yes or no answer based on a character's bonus and the DC you have selected. The dice don't run the game. You do.

As a DM, you should think about the role the dice play in your game. Do you prefer the vagaries of fate, or do you prefer to reward a good effort with success and a poor one with failure? Use your style to help guide when you call for rolls and when you simply declare success or failure.

## Multiple Checks

Sometimes, a character fails a check and wants to try again. You have a couple of options in this case.

In most cases, the character can simply try again. The only real cost is the time it takes. The character keeps trying and, after enough time passes, eventually succeeds. To speed things up, you can assume that a character can automatically succeed at a task if he or she spends twenty times the normal amount of time needed to complete it. This exception does not allow a character to turn an impossible task into a successful one.

In other cases, the first failure renders subsequent checks impossible. For instance, a rogue tries to trick a town guard into thinking that he is an undercover agent of the king. The rogue loses the contest of Charisma against Wisdom. The same lie told again clearly won't work.

## Incidental Actions

The basic rules for the game allow a creature to move and take an action on its turn. An adventurer is likely to do many things that are not described in the rules as an action: picking up a gem, readying a bow, and the like. The game assumes that such incidental tasks are so simple that they don't require actions of their own.

Most often, incidental actions occur in the process of doing something else, such as opening an unsecured door while moving or removing a piece of equipment from a pack in order to use it. For example, a fighter draws a sword and attacks an orc. Drawing a sword typically takes no action, as it takes only a moment to complete and is usually part of some more complex activity.

That said, imagine the same fighter trying to draw a sword while tied up. In this situation, the action is more complex and requires focus and effort. Drawing a sword would require a normal action and likely a check for the fighter to wiggle out of the rope. That's why incidental actions are under your purview.

Something that meets the following criteria should most likely not be an action.

- It never requires a die roll or any other rules.
- It is effortless.
- It is part of or enables an action or a move.

Here are examples of acts that are usually too incidental to require an action.

- Speaking
- Drawing a weapon
- Withdrawing a potion, a rope, or other piece of equipment from a pack
- Pushing open an unsecured and unstuck door
- Pulling a door closed while passing through it
- Picking up a small item
- Dropping an item
- Tipping over a flimsy piece of furniture

## Always Round Down

Whenever you divide a number in the game, round down if you end up with a fraction. Do so even if the fraction is 0.5 or more.

## Creature Size

During a battle, creatures take up different amounts of space on the battlefield. A lone ogre can block off a 10-foot-wide bridge, while over a dozen goblins could surround a storm giant. A creature's size determines how much space it takes up, how far its attacks can reach, and how many enemies can gang up on it.

Size	Reach	Space	Surround	Fills
Tiny	1 ft.	2.5 x 2.5 ft.	8	1
Small	5 ft.	5 x 5 ft.	8	1
Medium	5 ft.	5 x 5 ft.	8	1
Large	10 ft.	10 x 10 ft.	12	1.5
Huge	15 ft.	15 x 15 ft.	16	2
Gargantuan	20 ft.	20 x 20 ft.	20	2.5
Colossal	25 ft.	25 x 25 ft.	24	3

**Reach:** This is the creature's natural reach with melee attacks, unless the creature's description

states otherwise. Weapons such as a longspears can increase a creature's reach.

**Space:** This is the area in feet that a creature occupies. A creature's space is not an expression of its actual physical dimensions, but the area it effectively owns in the game. A human isn't 5 feet wide, but does own a space that wide, particularly in combat. If a human stands in a 5-foot-wide doorway, other creatures can't get through the doorway unless the human lets them.

A creature can squeeze through a space large enough for a creature one size category smaller than itself. When squeezing through such a space, every 5 feet of movement costs 5 extra feet of movement. While squeezing, a creature has disadvantage on attacks and on Dexterity saving throws, and attacks against it have advantage.

**Surround:** This column represents the number of Medium creatures that can fit in a 5-foot radius around the creature.

**Fills:** When creatures of different size surround one opponent, a creature counts as this many Medium size creatures when determining how many can fit in the threatened area.

For example, eight Medium creatures can surround a fellow Medium creature. A pair of Colossal creatures (worth three Medium each) and one Huge creature (worth two) could also surround a Medium creature.

## Illumination

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Characters face three broad categories of illumination in a typical D&D game.

### Bright Light

Bright light is also called normal light. Even gloomy days provide bright light, as do torches, lanterns, fires, and other sources of illumination within a specific radius.

**Effect:** Most creatures can see normally in bright light.

### Shadows

Shadows are also called dim light. An area of shadows is usually a boundary between a source of bright light, such as a torch, and surrounding darkness. Dim light is also common at twilight and just before dawn. A particularly brilliant full moon may cover the land beneath in shadows.

**Effect:** Creatures can see in shadows, but creatures and objects are lightly obscured within them.

## Darkness

Darkness is common at night under an overcast sky or within the confines of an unlit dungeon or subterranean vault. Sometimes magic can create regions of darkness.

**Effect:** Normal creatures can't see anything in darkness and are effectively blinded. Someone in darkness is heavily obscured from creatures who don't have enhanced senses.

# Common Tasks

This section provides an overview of the sorts of things that characters typically attempt in D&D. Think of this as a guide to using checks and saving throws. As always, use your good judgment when applying these guidelines. They are meant to provide storytelling and adjudication options to you, not to tie your hands creatively.

The tasks are divided into two categories, exploration and interaction. Each action includes sample DCs.

There are a number of character abilities, typically found in backgrounds, that grant bonuses to checks involving these actions. The rules are written to link such benefits to these actions, to help guide you in resolving them.

## Exploration

When the characters delve into an ancient tomb, sneak into a merchant's mansion, or walk the ruined streets of an ancient city, they might encounter any number of obstacles to their progress. Here are some typical actions the characters might attempt to circumvent those obstacles.

### Balance

When a character balances, he or she can walk on a precarious surface without falling. Such surfaces include a narrow beam that spans a pit, slippery ice, or a narrow ledge alongside a cliff. Balancing is usually a part of moving.

Every 5 feet of movement while balancing costs 5 extra feet. If you allow a character a chance to ignore this cost, the player must make the check with disadvantage.

Balancing typically requires a Dexterity check. A character makes this check when attempting to cross a precarious surface. You pick the DC based on the difficulty of the balancing attempt.

If the check fails, the character makes no progress and stops moving. If the check succeeds, the character can cross the surface.

**Hazard:** Hazards are very common for balance checks and usually cause a character to fall.

Balance	DC
Walk across an icy surface	11
Walk on a surface 2-6 inches wide	13
Cross a wildly swaying rope bridge	15
Walk on a surface less than 2 inches wide	17

### Climb

A character can climb a vertical surface, but cannot climb across a ceiling or similar surface without a special ability. Climbing is usually part of moving.

Every 5 feet of movement while climbing costs 5 extra feet. If you allow a character a chance to ignore this cost, the player must make the check with disadvantage.

Any surface or object that is easy to grasp, such as a tree, a rope, or a ship's rigging, usually does not require a check to climb.

Some climbs are perilous enough that a character must make a Strength or Dexterity check to make them. A character makes this check each time he or she attempts a perilous climb. You determine the DC based on the difficulty of the climb.

If the check fails, the character makes no progress. If the check succeeds, the character can climb as normal.

**Hazard:** Hazards apply for treacherous climbing conditions and cause a character to fall.

Climb	DC
Typical dungeon wall	11
A rough, natural surface such as a cliff	15
A slick surface, such as an oiled rope	21

### Escape Bonds

A character can slip bonds or manacles, wriggle out of ropes, squeeze out of a tight space, and escape the grasp of a monster, such as a roper. Most times attempting to escape bonds requires you to make a check (usually Strength or Dexterity, depending on the circumstances).

Call for a Dexterity check if the character must wriggle free. Use Strength if the character can break the bonds to escape.

**Hazard:** It is rare that escaping from bonds involves a hazard beyond failing and remaining trapped.

Escape Bonds (Strength)	DC
Rope	17
Manacles	21

Escape Bonds (Dexterity)	DC
Rope	15
Manacles	19

### Find and Disarm Traps

Some characters find traps by blundering into them. Most adventurers learn that it's best to spot a trap before triggering it.

A character can search for traps while moving. It's best if you make this check for the character in secret. A single Wisdom check covers about 10 minutes of movement. Record the check result, and if the check succeeds, inform the player that the character has spotted the trap when within 10 feet of it.

Once a character has found a trap, he or she can attempt to disarm it. In order to disarm a trap, a character must be proficient with thieves' tools. Any attempt to disarm a trap takes at least 1 minute.

**Hazard:** When attempting to disarm a trap, the typical hazard involves accidentally triggering it. If a character's disarm check fails by 10 or more, the trap triggers.

<b>Find a Trap</b>	<b>DC</b>
Pit covered with branches and leaves	11
Simple tripwire	13
Pressure plate	15
Transparent tripwire	17
Well-disguised pressure plate	21
Invisible trap	25+

<b>Disarm a Trap</b>	<b>DC</b>
Simple pit trap	11
Scything blade	13
Poison needle	15
Poison gas trap	17
Dwarven trap	21
Magic trap	25+

## Notice a Hiding Creature

It's better to detect the orcs' ambush before the arrows fly, or to find out what lies ahead before a character walks smack into a gelatinous cube.

A character can make a Wisdom check to try to find a hidden creature. This check is typically a contest against that creature's Dexterity check.

**Hazard:** A creature who fails to notice a hiding creature might be surprised. Other repercussions could include becoming ensnared in an effect or a creature like a gelatinous cube.

## Open a Door

Many doors open at the slightest touch. Opening them can be included in a move or even an action.

Other doors are stuck, locked, or barred. Battering a door open is typically a Strength check.

<b>Break Open a Locked or Barred Door</b>	<b>DC</b>
Wooden door	15
Heavy wooden door (typical dungeon door)	19
Iron door	21
Heavy iron door	25

## Pick a Lock

Although brute force is one way to deal with a locked door, a character can attempt to pick a lock.

Picking a lock typically requires 1 minute of work and a Dexterity check, with a DC based on the quality of the lock or the complexity of its components.

Most checks to pick a lock require thieves' tools, though some cheap or simple locks can be picked with improvised tools. A character can use thieves' tools only if he or she is proficient in their use.

<b>Pick a Lock</b>	<b>DC</b>
Cheap lock	11
Simple lock	13
Typical lock	15
Elaborate lock	19
Dwarven lock	21
One-of-a-kind lock	25+

## Recall Lore

A character can attempt to recall bits of lore and other information, ranging from details of the history of a long-dead empire, to the name of the duke's favorite horse. Recalling lore is almost always an Intelligence check, with a DC determined by how obscure the information is.

In addition, a character can attempt to determine the nature, origin, or meaning of ancient runes, art, symbols, and similar markings.

**Hazard:** There's a chance that a character recalls incorrect information. At your discretion, a check that fails by 10 or more reveals incorrect information. If you use this option, you should make such checks for the players in secret.

<b>Recall Lore</b>	<b>DC</b>
Common information from current events	11
Common information from recent history	13
Common information from ancient history	15
Specific details from current events	17
Specific details from recent history	19
Specific details from ancient history	21
Any obscure information	25+

## Search

A character can search for clues, find hidden traps, detect secret doors, or otherwise uncover objects or signs that are difficult to spot.

Searching an area is usually a Wisdom check. It takes about 1 minute to search a 5-foot-by-5-foot area. That time can increase if the area is filled with many small objects. For example, searching a bare corner of a room might take 1 minute, whereas

rifling through the contents of a desk stuffed with maps and tools might take 30 minutes.

**Hazard:** Traps are the main threat when characters try to search. If a character searches an area that contains a trap and fails the check by 10 or more, the trap probably triggers.

Search	DC
Hidden compartment in a chest	13
Secret door	15
Hidden gem	17
Dwarven secret door	21
Magic secret door	25+

## Swim

A character can swim through water or any other liquid. Swimming is usually a part of moving.

Every 5 feet of movement while swimming costs 5 extra feet. If you allow a character a chance to ignore this cost, the player must make the check with disadvantage.

Some swims are difficult enough that a character must make a Strength or Constitution check. A character makes this check each time he or she tries a difficult swim. You determine the DC based on the difficulty of the swim.

If the check fails, the character makes no progress. If the check succeeds, the character can swim as normal.

**Hazard:** A character who fails by 10 or more might sink and begin to drown.

Swim	DC
Tread water in rough conditions	11
Swim in stormy waters	17
Swim free of a vortex	25

### Holding Your Breath and Drowning

If a character is swimming underwater intentionally (not as a result of a failed swim check), the character can hold his or her breath for a number of minutes equal to his or her Constitution modifier (minimum 30 seconds).

A character who fails a swim check by 10 or more or who runs out of breath is drowning. While drowning, the character is restrained. As an action, a drowning character can make a Strength check to stop drowning. The DC to do so is the same as the one needed to swim or 12, whichever is higher. The drowning character must breathe before a number of rounds pass equal to his or her Constitution modifier (minimum 1) or fall unconscious. Once unconscious, the drowning character is dying and can be saved from death only by magic or a combination of exposure to air and a resuscitation effort.

## Track

A character can try to spot tracks or other signs of a creature's passage, allowing the character to determine the type of creature that moved through an area, what direction it traveled, and how long ago it passed through.

Searching an area for tracks is usually a Wisdom check. It takes about 1 minute to search a 5-foot-by-5-foot area.

Track	DC
Soft surface, such as snow	11
Dirt or grass	15
Bare stone	19
Per full day since the creature passed	+5

## Interaction

At some point during a campaign, the characters will need to resort to words rather than swords or spells.

There are several schools of thought when it comes to handling interactions in a roleplaying game. Some DMs prefer to speak in character, adopting the mannerisms of a nonplayer character in the same way that an actor depicts a character.

Other DMs prefer simply to describe an NPC's dialogue, giving a basic outline of what an NPC has to say, rather than narrating the exact dialogue.

Players fall into similar camps. Don't try to force the players into one approach or the other. Just as some people like to play fighters and others prefer rogues, so too do different players take different approaches to portraying their characters.

No matter which approach you use, an interaction should be driven by the back-and-forth between an NPC and the characters. Dice should come into play only when you are unsure about a conversation's outcome.

Players who shy away from roleplaying prefer to let the dice do the talking for them. For such players, it's probably best to rely on the dice, rather than force that player to go against his or her preferences.

## Check or Contest?

In most cases, you use checks for social interactions. Contests should come into play only if two parties are in direct conflict, such as in an argument, a debate, or a negotiation.

## Determining DCs

Picking a DC for an interaction check follows the normal guidelines for determining a DC. However, it is important to consider the context of the check. A conversation is a fluid thing. Base the DC on how things are flowing in the moment. How has the conversation ebbed and flowed? What does an NPC think of the characters? A stilted, awkward exchange can turn a simple request into a high DC.

Think of whom the speaker is trying to sway or impress. You can do worse than start with an NPC's Wisdom or Charisma score as a base DC. Use Wisdom for attempts to trick, bluff, or intimidate someone, while Charisma is a good choice in most other situations.

With that as a starting point, consider the NPC's attitude toward the speaker. A positive attitude can grant advantage, whereas a negative attitude or a faux pas can impose disadvantage.

## Bluff

Bluffing involves any attempt to lie to someone. When adjudicating a bluff, take into account the level of trust between the speaker and the audience and the plausibility of the lie.

## Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the fine art of negotiation. It involves bringing another party around to the speaker's point of view. Diplomacy is used to create agreement or to negotiate. The key to altering the DC in a diplomatic situation is to propose something that a listener finds agreeable.

## Intimidate

The brute force approach to interactions, intimidation allows a speaker to use threats and fear to get what he or she wants. What the speaker wants plays a role in determining the DC (does it harm or hinder the listener?), as does the nature of any threats. For example, a confident warrior might laugh off threats of violence, but he might take seriously any threats to his family's well-being.

## Gather Information

Gathering information is a form of interaction, but it involves interactions with a number of different people and can include asking questions high and low, as well as eavesdropping on relevant conversations. Characters might want to collect rumors about the dungeon they plan to visit or uncover gossip about a pivotal NPC.

A typical attempt at gathering information involves 4 hours of legwork and a Charisma check.

**Hazard:** Not everyone likes a snoop. In a rough part of town, a failure by 10 or more might draw the attention of a thieves' guild or worse.

### Gather Information

	DC
Common gossip	11
Information known only to a small group	15
Obscure news or lore	19+