



# **I** GETTING STARTED



**T**he dragon roared in triumph as Valeros collapsed into the snow, blood spurting from the terrible wound in his belly. Kyra rushed to his side, praying that she wasn't too late to save his life.

"I'll hold the beast off!" Seoni cried as she stepped up to the dragon, her staff flaring with defensive fire. Merisiel looked to the hulking dragon, then at the delicate sorcerer, and shook her head sadly.

The adventure had just barely begun, and judging by this fight alone, they weren't getting paid enough for the job.

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game is a tabletop fantasy game in which the players take on the roles of heroes who form a group (or party) to set out on dangerous adventures. Helping them tell this story is the Game Master (or GM), who decides what threats the player characters (or PCs) face and what sorts of rewards they earn for succeeding at their quest. Think of it as a cooperative storytelling game, where the players play the protagonists and the Game Master acts as the narrator, controlling the rest of the world.

If you are a player, you make all of the decisions for your character, from what abilities your character has to the type of weapon he carries. Playing a character, however, is more than just following the rules in this book. You also decide your character's personality. Is he a noble knight, set on vanquishing a powerful evil, or is he a conniving rogue who cares more about gold than glory? The choice is up to you.

If you are a Game Master, you control the world that the players explore. Your job is to bring the setting to life and to present the characters with challenges that are both fair and exciting. From the local merchant prince to the rampaging dragon, you control all of the characters that are not being played by the players. Paizo's *Pathfinder Adventure Path* series, *Pathfinder Modules*, and *Pathfinder Chronicles* world guides provide everything you need to run a game, or you can invent your own, using the rules in this book as well as the monsters found in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.

**What You Need:** In addition to this book, you will need a number of special dice to play the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. The dice that come with most board games have six sides, but the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game uses dice with four sides, six sides, eight sides, ten sides, twelve sides, and twenty sides. Dice of this sort can be found at your local game store or online at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com).

In addition to dice, if you are a player, you will need a character sheet (which can be photocopied from the back of this book) and, if the Game Master uses a map to represent the adventure, a small figurine to represent your character. These figurines, or miniatures, can also be found at most game stores. They come in a wide variety of styles, so you can probably find a miniature that relatively accurately depicts your character.

If you are the Game Master, you will need a copy of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*, which contains the rules for a whole spectrum of monsters, from the mighty dragon to the lowly goblin. While many of these monsters can be used to fight against the players, others might provide useful information or become powerful allies. Some might even join the group, with one of the players taking on the role of a monstrous character. In addition, you should have your own set of dice and some sort of screen you can use to hide your notes, maps, and dice rolls

behind. (Although you should be honest about the results of your dice rolls, sometimes the results are not evident, and openly rolling the dice might give away too much information.) Combat in the Pathfinder RPG can be resolved in one of two ways: you can describe the situation to the characters and allow them to interact based on the description you provide, or you can draw the situation on a piece of paper or a specially made battle mat and allow the characters to move their miniatures around to more accurately represent their position during the battle. While both ways have their advantages, if you choose the latter, you will need a mat to draw on, such as Paizo's line of GameMastery Flip-Mats, as well as miniatures to represent the monsters or other adversaries. These can also be found at your local game shop, or at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com).

**Playing the Game:** While playing the Pathfinder RPG, the Game Master describes the events that occur in the game world, and the players take turns describing what their characters do in response to those events. Unlike storytelling, however, the actions of the players and the characters controlled by the Game Master (frequently called non-player characters, or NPCs) are not certain. Most actions require dice rolls to determine success, with some tasks being more difficult than others. Each character is better at some things than he is at other things, granting him bonuses based on his skills and abilities.

Whenever a roll is required, the roll is noted as "d#", with the "#" representing the number of sides on the die. If you need to roll multiple dice of the same type, there will be a number before the "d." For example, if you are required to roll 4d6, you should roll four six-sided dice and add the results together. Sometimes there will be a + or - after the notation, meaning that you add that number to, or subtract it from, the total results of the dice (not to each individual die rolled). Most die rolls in the game use a d20 with a number of modifiers based on the character's skills, his or her abilities, and the situation. Generally speaking, rolling high is better than rolling low. Percentile rolls are a special case, indicated as rolling d%. You can generate a random number in this range by rolling two differently colored ten-sided dice (2d10). Pick one color to represent the tens digit, then roll both dice. If the die chosen to be the tens digit rolls a "4" and the other d10 rolls a "2," then you've generated a 42. A zero on the tens digit die indicates a result from 1 to 9, or 100 if both dice result in a zero. Some d10s are printed with "10," "20," "30," and so on in order to make reading d% rolls easier. Unless otherwise noted, whenever you must round a number, always round down.

As your character goes on adventures, he earns gold, magic items, and experience points. Gold can be used to purchase better equipment, while magic items possess powerful abilities that enhance your character.



Experience points are awarded for overcoming challenges and completing major storylines. When your character has earned enough experience points, he increases his character level by one, granting him new powers and abilities that allow him to take on even greater challenges. While a 1st-level character might be up to saving a farmer's daughter from rampaging goblins, defeating a terrifying red dragon might require the powers of a 20th-level hero. It is the Game Master's duty to provide challenges for your character that are engaging, but not so deadly as to leave you with no hope of success. For more information on the duties of being a Game Master, see Chapter 12.

Above all, have fun. Playing the Pathfinder RPG is supposed to be exciting and rewarding for both the Game Master and the players. Adventure awaits!

### The Most Important Rule

The rules in this book are here to help you breathe life into your characters and the world they explore. While they are designed to make your game easy and exciting, you might find that some of them do not suit the style of play that your gaming group enjoys. Remember that these rules are yours. You can change them to fit your needs. Most Game Masters

have a number of "house rules" that they use in their games. The Game Master and players should always discuss any rules changes to make sure that everyone understands how the game will be played. Although the Game Master is the final arbiter of the rules, the Pathfinder RPG is a shared experience, and all of the players should contribute their thoughts when the rules are in doubt.

### USING THIS BOOK

This book is divided into 15 chapters, along with a host of appendices. Chapters 1 through 11 cover all of the rules needed by players to create characters and play the game. Chapters 12 through 15 contain information intended to help a Game Master run the game and adjudicate the world. Generally speaking, if you are a player, you do not need to know the information in these later chapters, but you might be asked to reference them occasionally. The following synopses are presented to give you a broad overview of the rules encompassed within this book.

**Chapter 1 (Getting Started):** This chapter covers the basics of the Pathfinder RPG, including information on how to reference the rest of the book, rules for generating player characters (PCs), and rules for determining a

character's ability scores. Ability scores are the most basic attributes possessed by a character, describing his raw potential and ability.

**Chapter 2 (Races):** The Pathfinder RPG contains seven core races that represent the most common races in the game world. They are dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, half-orcs, halflings, and humans. This chapter covers all of the rules needed to play a member of one of these races. When creating a PC, you should choose one of the races from this chapter.

**Chapter 3 (Classes):** There are 11 core classes in the Pathfinder RPG. Classes represent a character's basic profession, and each one grants a host of special abilities. A character's class also determines a wide variety of other statistics used by the character, including hit points, saving throw bonuses, weapon and armor proficiencies, and skill ranks. This chapter also covers the rules for advancing your character as he grows in power (gaining levels). Gaining additional levels in a class grants additional abilities and increases other statistics. When creating a PC, you should choose one class from this chapter and put one level into that class (for example, if you choose your starting class to be wizard, you would be a 1st-level wizard).

**Chapter 4 (Skills):** This chapter covers skills and how to use them during the game. Skills represent a wide variety of simple tasks that a character can perform, from climbing a wall to sneaking past a guard. Each character receives a number of skill ranks, which can be used to make the character better at using some skills. As a character gains levels, he receives additional skill ranks, which can be used to improve existing skills possessed by the character or to become proficient in the use of new skills. A character's class determines how many skill ranks a character can spend.

**Chapter 5 (Feats):** Each character possesses a number of feats, which allow the character to perform some special action or grant some other capability that would otherwise not be allowed. Each character begins play with at least one feat, and new feat choices are awarded as a character advances in level.

**Chapter 6 (Equipment):** This chapter covers the basic gear and equipment that can be purchased, from armor and weapons to torches and backpacks. Here you will also find listed the cost for common services, such as staying in an inn or booking passage on a boat. Starting characters receive an amount of gold based on their respective classes which they can spend on equipment at 1st level.

**Chapter 7 (Additional Rules):** The rules in this chapter cover several miscellaneous rules that are important to playing the Pathfinder RPG, including alignment, encumbrance, movement, and visibility. Alignment tells you whether your character is an irredeemable villain, a virtuous hero, or anywhere in between. Encumbrance

deals with how much weight your character can carry without being hindered. Movement describes the distance your character can travel in a minute, hour, or day, depending upon his race and the environment. Visibility deals with how far your character can see, based on race and the prevailing light conditions.

**Chapter 8 (Combat):** All characters eventually end up in life-or-death struggles against fearsome monsters and dangerous villains. This chapter covers how to deal with combat in the Pathfinder RPG. During combat, each character acts in turn (determined by initiative), with the order repeating itself until one side has perished or is otherwise defeated. In this chapter, you will find rules for taking a turn in combat, covering all of the various actions that you can perform. This chapter also includes rules for adjudicating special combat maneuvers (such as attempting to trip your enemy or trying to disarm his weapon) and character injury and death.

**Chapter 9 (Magic):** A number of classes (and some monsters) can cast spells, which can do nearly anything, from bringing the dead back to life to roasting your enemies with a ball of fire. This chapter deals with the rules for casting spells and learning new spells to cast. If your character can cast spells, you should become familiar with these rules.

**Chapter 10 (Spells):** Whereas the magic chapter describes how to cast a spell, this chapter deals with the individual spells themselves, starting with the lists of which spells are available to characters based on their classes. This is followed up by an extensive listing of every spell in the game, including its effects, range, duration, and other important variables. A character that can cast spells should read up on all the spells that are available to him.

**Chapter 11 (Prestige Classes):** Although the core classes in Chapter 3 allow for a wide variety of character types, prestige classes allow a character to become a master of one select theme. These advanced classes grant a specialized list of abilities that make a character very powerful in one area. A character must meet specific prerequisites before deciding to take levels in a prestige class. These prerequisites vary depending upon the prestige class. If you plan on taking levels in a prestige class, you should familiarize yourself with the prerequisites to ensure that your character can eventually meet them.

**Chapter 12 (Gamemastering):** This chapter covers the basics of running the Pathfinder RPG. It includes guidelines for creating a game, using a published adventure, adjudicating matters at the table, and awarding experience points and treasure. If you are the GM, you should become familiar with the concepts presented in this chapter.

**Chapter 13 (Environment):** Aside from fighting against monsters, a host of other dangers and challenges await

the PCs as they play the Pathfinder RPG. This chapter covers the rules for adjudicating the environment, from cunning traps to bubbling lava, and is broken down by environment type, including dungeons, deserts, mountains, forests, swamps, aquatic, urban, and other dimensions and planes beyond reality. Finally, this chapter also includes information on weather and its effects on the game.

**Chapter 14 (Creating NPCs):** In addition to characters and monsters, the world is populated by countless nonplayer characters (NPCs). These characters are created and controlled by the GM and represent every other person that exists in the game world, from the local shopkeep to the greedy king. This chapter includes simple classes used by most NPCs (although some can possess levels in the core classes and prestige classes) and a system for generating an NPC's statistics quickly.

**Chapter 15 (Magic Items):** As a character goes on adventures, he often finds magic items to help him in his struggles. This chapter covers these magic items in detail, including weapons, armor, potions, rings, rods, scrolls, staves, and wondrous items (a generic category that covers everything else). In addition, you will find cursed items (which hinder those who wield them), intelligent items, artifacts (items of incredible power), and the rules for creating new magic items in this chapter.

**Appendices:** The appendices at the back of the book gather a number of individual rules concerning special abilities and conditions. This section also includes a list of recommended reading and a discussion of other tools and products that you can use for a more enjoyable Pathfinder RPG experience.

## COMMON TERMS

The Pathfinder RPG uses a number of terms, abbreviations, and definitions in presenting the rules of the game. The following are among the most common.

**Ability Score:** Each creature has six ability scores: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. These scores represent a creature's most basic attributes. The higher the score, the more raw potential and talent your character possesses.

**Action:** An action is a discrete measurement of time during a round of combat. Using abilities, casting spells, and making attacks all require actions to perform. There are a number of different kinds of actions, such as a standard action, move action, swift action, free action, and full-round action (see Chapter 8).

**Alignment:** Alignment represents a creature's basic moral and ethical attitude. Alignment has two components: one describing whether a creature is lawful, neutral, or chaotic, followed by another that describes whether a character is good, neutral, or evil. Alignments

are usually abbreviated using the first letter of each alignment component, such as LN for lawful neutral or CE for chaotic evil. Creatures that are neutral in both components are denoted by a single "N."

**Armor Class (AC):** All creatures in the game have an Armor Class. This score represents how hard it is to hit a creature in combat. As with other scores, higher is better.

**Base Attack Bonus (BAB):** Each creature has a base attack bonus and it represents its skill in combat. As a character gains levels or Hit Dice, his base attack bonus improves. When a creature's base attack bonus reaches +6, +11, or +16, he receives an additional attack in combat when he takes a full-attack action (which is one type of full-round action—see Chapter 8).

**Bonus:** Bonuses are numerical values that are added to checks and statistical scores. Most bonuses have a type, and as a general rule, bonuses of the same type are not cumulative (do not "stack")—only the greater bonus granted applies.

**Caster Level (CL):** Caster level represents a creature's power and ability when casting spells. When a creature casts a spell, it often contains a number of variables, such as range or damage, that are based on the caster's level.

**Class:** Classes represent chosen professions taken by characters and some other creatures. Classes give a host of bonuses and allow characters to take actions that they otherwise could not, such as casting spells or changing shape. As a creature gains levels in a given class, it gains new, more powerful abilities. Most PCs gain levels in the core classes or prestige classes, since these are the most powerful (see Chapters 3 and 11). Most NPCs gain levels in NPC classes, which are less powerful (see Chapter 14).

**Check:** A check is a d20 roll which may or may not be modified by another value. The most common types are attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws.

**Combat Maneuver:** This is an action taken in combat that does not directly cause harm to your opponent, such as attempting to trip him, disarm him, or grapple with him (see Chapter 8).

**Combat Maneuver Bonus (CMB):** This value represents how skilled a creature is at performing a combat maneuver. When attempting to perform a combat maneuver, this value is added to the character's d20 roll.

**Combat Maneuver Defense (CMD):** This score represents how hard it is to perform a combat maneuver against this creature. A creature's CMD is used as the difficulty class when performing a maneuver against that creature.

**Concentration Check:** When a creature is casting a spell, but is disrupted during the casting, he must make a concentration check or fail to cast the spell (see Chapter 9).

**Creature:** A creature is an active participant in the story or world. This includes PCs, NPCs, and monsters.

**Damage Reduction (DR):** Creatures that are resistant to harm typically have damage reduction. This amount is subtracted from any damage dealt to them from a physical source. Most types of DR can be bypassed by certain types of weapons. This is denoted by a “/” followed by the type, such as “10/cold iron.” Some types of DR apply to all physical attacks. Such DR is denoted by the “—” symbol. See Appendix 1 for more information.

**Difficulty Class (DC):** Whenever a creature attempts to perform an action whose success is not guaranteed, he must make some sort of check (usually a skill check). The result of that check must meet or exceed the Difficulty Class of the action that the creature is attempting to perform in order for the action to be successful.

**Extraordinary Abilities (Ex):** Extraordinary abilities are unusual abilities that do not rely on magic to function.

**Experience Points (XP):** As a character overcomes challenges, defeats monsters, and completes quests, he gains experience points. These points accumulate over time, and when they reach or surpass a specific value, the character gains a level.

**Feat:** A feat is an ability a creature has mastered. Feats often allow creatures to circumvent rules or restrictions. Creatures receive a number of feats based off their Hit Dice, but some classes and other abilities grant bonus feats.

**Game Master (GM):** A Game Master is the person who adjudicates the rules and controls all of the elements of the story and world that the players explore. A GM’s duty is to provide a fair and fun game.

**Hit Dice (HD):** Hit Dice represent a creature’s general level of power and skill. As a creature gains levels, it gains additional Hit Dice. Monsters, on the other hand, gain racial Hit Dice, which represent the monster’s general prowess and ability. Hit Dice are represented by the number the creature possesses followed by a type of die, such as “3d8.” This value is used to determine a creature’s total hit points. In this example, the creature has 3 Hit Dice. When rolling for this creature’s hit points, you would roll a d8 three times and add the results together, along with other modifiers.

**Hit Points (hp):** Hit points are an abstraction signifying how robust and healthy a creature is at the current moment. To determine a creature’s hit points, roll the dice indicated by its Hit Dice. A creature gains maximum hit points if its first Hit Die roll is for a character class level. Creatures whose first Hit Die comes from an NPC class or from his race roll their first Hit Die normally. Wounds subtract hit points, while healing (both natural and magical) restores hit points. Some abilities and spells grant temporary hit points that disappear after a specific duration. When a creature’s hit points drop below 0, it becomes unconscious. When a creature’s hit points reach a negative total equal to its Constitution score, it dies.

**Initiative:** Whenever combat begins, all creatures involved in the battle must make an initiative check to determine the order in which creatures act during combat. The higher the result of the check, the earlier a creature gets to act.

**Level:** A character’s level represents his overall ability and power. There are three types of levels. Class level is the number of levels of a specific class possessed by a character. Character level is the sum of all of the levels possessed by a character in all of his classes. In addition, spells have a level associated with them numbered from 0 to 9. This level indicates the general power of the spell. As a spellcaster gains levels, he learns to cast spells of a higher level.

**Monster:** Monsters are creatures that rely on racial Hit Dice instead of class levels for their powers and abilities (although some possess class levels as well). PCs are usually not monsters.

**Multiplying:** When you are asked to apply more than one multiplier to a roll, the multipliers are not multiplied by one another. Instead, you combine them into a single multiplier, with each extra multiple adding 1 less than its value to the first multiple. For example, if you are asked to apply a  $\times 2$  multiplier twice, the result would be  $\times 3$ , not  $\times 4$ .

**Nonplayer Character (NPC):** These are characters controlled by the GM.

**Penalty:** Penalties are numerical values that are subtracted from a check or statistical score. Penalties do not have a type and most penalties stack with one another.

**Player Character (Character, PC):** These are the characters portrayed by the players.

**Round:** Combat is measured in rounds. During an individual round, all creatures have a chance to take a turn to act, in order of initiative. A round represents 6 seconds in the game world.

**Rounding:** Occasionally the rules ask you to round a result or value. Unless otherwise stated, always round down. For example, if you are asked to take half of 7, the result would be 3.

**Saving Throw:** When a creature is the subject of a dangerous spell or effect, it often receives a saving throw to mitigate the damage or result. Saving throws are passive, meaning that a character does not need to take an action to make a saving throw—they are made automatically. There are three types of saving throws: Fortitude (used to resist poisons, diseases, and other bodily ailments), Reflex (used to avoid effects that target an entire area, such as *fireball*), and Will (used to resist mental attacks and spells).

**Skill:** A skill represents a creature’s ability to perform an ordinary task, such as climb a wall, sneak down a hallway, or spot an intruder. The number of ranks possessed by a creature in a given skill represents its proficiency in that skill. As a creature gains Hit Dice, it also gains additional skill ranks that can be added to its skills.

**Spell:** Spells can perform a wide variety of tasks, from harming enemies to bringing the dead back to life. Spells specify what they can target, what their effects are, and how they can be resisted or negated.

**Spell-Like Abilities (Sp):** Spell-like abilities function just like spells, but are granted through a special racial ability or by a specific class ability (as opposed to spells, which are gained by spellcasting classes as a character gains levels).

**Spell Resistance (SR):** Some creatures are resistant to magic and gain spell resistance. When a creature with spell resistance is targeted by a spell, the caster of the spell must make a caster level check to see if the spell affects the target. The DC of this check is equal to the target creature's SR (some spells do not allow SR checks).

**Stacking:** Stacking refers to the act of adding together bonuses or penalties that apply to one particular check or statistic. Generally speaking, most bonuses of the same type do not stack. Instead, only the highest bonus applies. Most penalties do stack, meaning that their values are added together. Penalties and bonuses generally stack with one another, meaning that the penalties might negate or exceed part or all of the bonuses, and vice versa.

**Supernatural Abilities (Su):** Supernatural abilities are magical attacks, defenses, and qualities. These abilities can be always active or they can require a specific action to utilize. The supernatural ability's description includes information on how it is used and its effects.

**Turn:** In a round, a creature receives one turn, during which it can perform a wide variety of actions. Generally in the course of one turn, a character can perform one standard action, one move action, one swift action, and a number of free actions. Less-common combinations of actions are permissible as well, see Chapter 8 for more details.

## EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The GM is running a group of four players through their latest adventure. They are playing Seelah (a human paladin), Ezren (a human wizard), Harsk (a dwarf ranger) and Lem (a halfling bard). The four adventurers are exploring the ruins of an ancient keep, after hearing rumors that there are great treasures to be found in its musty vaults. As the adventurers make their way toward the crumbling edifice, they cross an ancient stone bridge. After describing the scene, the GM asks the players what they want to do.

**Harsk:** Let's keep moving. I don't like the look of this place. I draw my crossbow and load it.

**Seelah:** Agreed. I draw my sword, just in case.

**Ezren:** I'm going to cast *light* so that we can see where we're going.

**GM:** Alright, a flickering glow springs up from your hand, illuminating the area.

**Lem:** I'd like to keep a lookout, just to make sure there are no monsters nearby.

*The GM consults his notes about this part of the adventure and realizes that there are indeed some monsters nearby, and that the PCs have walked into their trap.*

**GM:** Lem, could you roll a Perception check?

*Lem rolls a d20 and gets a 12. He then consults his character sheet to find his bonus on Perception skill checks, which turns out to be a +6.*

**Lem:** I got an 18. What do I see?

**GM:** As you turn around, you spot six dark shapes moving up behind you. As they enter the light from Ezren's spell, you can tell that they're skeletons, marching onto the bridge wearing rusting armor and waving ancient swords.

**Lem:** Guys, I think we have a problem.

**GM:** You do indeed. Can I get everyone to roll initiative?

*To determine the order of combat, each one of the players rolls a d20 and adds his or her initiative bonus. The GM rolls once for the skeletons and one additional time for their hidden leader. Seelah gets an 18, Harsk a 16, Ezren a 12, and Lem a 5. The skeletons get an 11, and their leader rolled an 8.*

**GM:** Seelah, you have the highest initiative. It's your turn.

**Seelah:** Since they're skeletons, I'm going to attempt to destroy them using the power of my goddess Iomedae. I channel positive energy.

*Seelah rolls 2d6 and gets a 7.*

**Seelah:** The skeletons take 7 points of damage, but they get to make a DC 15 Will save to only take half damage.

*The GM rolls the Will saving throws for the skeletons and gets an 18, two 17s, a 15, an 8, and a 3. Since four of the skeletons made their saving throws, they only take half damage (3 points), while the other two take the full 7 points of damage.*

**GM:** Two of the skeletons burst into flames and crumble as the power of your deity washes over them. The other four continue their advance. Harsk, it's your turn.

**Harsk:** Great. I'm going to fire my crossbow at the nearest skeleton.

*Harsk rolls a d20 and gets a 13. He adds that to his bonus on attack rolls with his crossbow and announces a total of 22. The GM checks the skeleton's armor class, which is only a 14.*

**GM:** That's a hit. Roll for damage.

*Harsk rolls a d10 and gets an 8. The GM realizes that the skeletons have damage reduction that can only be overcome by bludgeoning weapons. Since crossbow bolts deal piercing damage, the skeleton's damage reduction reduces the damage from 8 to 3, but this is still enough to reduce that skeleton's hit points to below 0.*

**GM:** Although the crossbow bolt seemed to do less damage against the skeleton's ancient bones, the hit was hard enough to cause that skeleton to break apart. Ezren, it's your turn.

**Ezren:** I'm going to cast *magic missile* at the skeleton that's closest to me.

*Magic missile creates a number of glowing darts that always hit their target. Ezren rolls 1d4+1 for each missile and gets a*





total of 6. Since this is magic, it automatically bypasses the skeleton's DR, causing another one to fall.

**GM:** There are only two skeletons left, and it's their turn. One of them charges up to Seelah and takes a swing at her, while the other moves up to Harsk and attacks.

*The GM rolls a d20 for both attacks. The attack against Seelah is only an 8, which is not equal to or higher than her AC of 18. The attack against Harsk is a 17, which beats his AC of 16. The GM rolls damage for the skeleton's attack.*

**GM:** The skeleton hits you, Harsk, leaving a nasty cut on your upper arm. Take 7 points of damage.

**Harsk:** Ouch. I have 22 hit points left.

**GM:** That's not all. Charging out of the fog onto the bridge is a skeleton dressed like a knight, riding the bones of a long-dead horse. The heads of the warrior's previous victims are mounted atop its deadly lance. Lem, it's your turn. What do you do?

**Lem:** Run!

*The combat continues in order, starting over with Seelah, until one side or the other is defeated. If the PCs survive the fight, they can continue on to the ancient castle to see what treasures and perils lie within.*

## GENERATING A CHARACTER

From the sly rogue to the stalwart paladin, the Pathfinder RPG allows you to make the character you want to play.

When generating a character, start with your character's concept. Do you want a character who goes toe-to-toe with terrible monsters, matching sword and shield against claws and fangs? Or do you want a mystical seer who draws his powers from the great beyond to further his own ends? Nearly anything is possible.

Once you have a general concept worked out, use the following steps to bring your idea to life, recording the resulting information and statistics on your Pathfinder RPG character sheet, which can be found at the back of this book and photocopied for your convenience.

**Step 1—Determine Ability Scores:** Start by generating your character's ability scores (see page 15). These six scores determine your character's most basic attributes and are used to decide a wide variety of details and statistics. Some class selections require you to have better than average scores for some of your abilities.

**Step 2—Pick Your Race:** Next, pick your character's race, noting any modifiers to your ability scores and any other racial traits (see Chapter 2). There are seven basic races to choose from, although your GM might have others to add to the list. Each race lists the languages your character automatically knows, as well as a number of bonus languages. A character knows a number of additional bonus languages equal to his or her Intelligence modifier (see page 17).

**Step 3—Pick Your Class:** A character's class represents a profession, such as fighter or wizard. If this is a new character, he starts at 1st level in his chosen class. As he gains experience points (XP) for defeating monsters, he goes up in level, granting him new powers and abilities.

**Step 4—Pick Skills and Select Feats:** Determine the number of skill ranks possessed by your character, based on his class and Intelligence modifier (and any other bonuses, such as the bonus received by humans). Then spend these ranks on skills, but remember that you cannot have more ranks than your level in any one skill (for a starting character, this is usually one). After skills, determine how many feats your character receives, based on his class and level, and select them from those presented in Chapter 5.

**Step 5—Buy Equipment:** Each new character begins the game with an amount of gold, based on his class, that can be spent on a wide range of equipment and gear, from chainmail armor to leather backpacks. This gear helps your character survive while adventuring. Generally speaking, you cannot use this starting money to buy magic items without the consent of your GM.

**Step 6—Finishing Details:** Finally, you need to determine all of a character's details, including his starting hit points (hp), Armor Class (AC), saving throws, initiative modifier, and attack values. All of these numbers are determined by the decisions made in previous steps. A level 1 character begins with maximum hit points for its Hit Die roll. Aside from these, you need to decide on your character's name, alignment, and physical appearance. It is best to jot down a few personality traits as well, to help you play the character during the game. Additional rules (like age and alignment) are described in Chapter 7.

## ABILITY SCORES

Each character has six ability scores that represent his character's most basic attributes. They are his raw talent and prowess. While a character rarely rolls an ability check (using just an ability score), these scores, and the modifiers they create, affect nearly every aspect of a character's skills and abilities. Each ability score generally ranges from 3 to 18, although racial bonuses and penalties can alter this; an average ability score is 10.

### Generating Ability Scores

There are a number of different methods used to generate ability scores. Each of these methods gives a different level of flexibility and randomness to character generation.

Racial modifiers (adjustments made to your ability scores due to your character's race—see Chapter 2) are applied after the scores are generated.

**Standard:** Roll 4d6, discard the lowest die result, and add the three remaining results together. Record this total and repeat the process until six numbers are generated.

Assign these totals to your ability scores as you see fit. This method is less random than Classic and tends to create characters with above-average ability scores.

**Classic:** Roll 3d6 and add the dice together. Record this total and repeat the process until you generate six numbers. Assign these results to your ability scores as you see fit. This method is quite random, and some characters will have clearly superior abilities. This randomness can be taken one step further, with the totals applied to specific ability scores in the order they are rolled. Characters generated using this method are difficult to fit to predetermined concepts, as their scores might not support given classes or personalities, and instead are best designed around their ability scores.

**Heroic:** Roll 2d6 and add 6 to the sum of the dice. Record this total and repeat the process until six numbers are generated. Assign these totals to your ability scores as you see fit. This is less random than the Standard method and generates characters with mostly above-average scores.

**Dice Pool:** Each character has a pool of 24d6 to assign to his statistics. Before the dice are rolled, the player selects the number of dice to roll for each score, with a minimum of 3d6 for each ability. Once the dice have been assigned, the player rolls each group and totals the result of the three highest dice. For more high-powered games, the GM should increase the total number of dice to 28. This method generates characters of a similar power to the Standard method.

**Purchase:** Each character receives a number of points to spend on increasing his basic attributes. In this method, all attributes start at a base of 10. A character can increase an individual score by spending some of his points. Likewise, he can gain more points to spend on other scores by decreasing one or more of his ability scores. No score can be reduced below 7 or raised above 18 using this method. See Table 1–1 on the next page for the costs of each score. After all the points are spent, apply any racial modifiers the character might have.

The number of points you have to spend using the purchase method depends on the type of campaign you are playing. The standard value for a character is 15 points. Average nonplayer characters (NPCs) are typically built using as few as 3 points. See Table 1–2 on the next page for a number of possible point values depending on the style of campaign. The purchase method emphasizes player choice and creates equally balanced characters. This system is typically used for organized play events, such as the Pathfinder Society (visit [paizo.com/pathfinderSociety](http://paizo.com/pathfinderSociety) for more details on this exciting campaign).

### Determine Bonuses

Each ability, after changes made because of race, has a modifier ranging from –5 to +5. Table 1–3 shows the modifier for each score. The modifier is the number

you apply to the die roll when your character tries to do something related to that ability. You also use the modifier with some numbers that aren't die rolls. A positive modifier is called a bonus, and a negative modifier is called a penalty. The table also shows bonus spells, which you'll need to know about if your character is a spellcaster.

### Abilities and Spellcasters

The ability that governs bonus spells depends on what type of spellcaster your character is: Intelligence for wizards; Wisdom for clerics, druids, and rangers; and Charisma for bards, paladins, and sorcerers. In addition to having a high ability score, a spellcaster must be of a high enough class level to be able to cast spells or use spell slots of a given spell level. See the class descriptions in Chapter 3 for details.

### The Abilities

Each ability partially describes your character and affects some of his actions.

#### Strength (Str)

Strength measures muscle and physical power. This ability is important for those who engage in hand-to-hand (or "melee") combat, such as fighters, monks, paladins, and some rangers. Strength also sets the maximum amount of weight your character can carry. A character with a Strength score of 0 is too weak to move in any way and is unconscious. Some creatures do not possess a Strength score and have no modifier at all to Strength-based skills or checks.

You apply your character's Strength modifier to:

- Melee attack rolls.
- Damage rolls when using a melee weapon or a thrown weapon, including a sling. (Exceptions: Off-hand attacks receive only half the character's Strength bonus, while

two-handed attacks receive 1–1/2 times the Strength bonus. A Strength penalty, but not a bonus, applies to attacks made with a bow that is not a composite bow.)

- Climb and Swim checks.
- Strength checks (for breaking down doors and the like).

#### Dexterity (Dex)

Dexterity measures agility, reflexes, and balance. This ability is the most important one for rogues, but it's also useful for characters who wear light or medium armor or no armor at all. This ability is vital for characters seeking to excel with ranged weapons, such as the bow or sling. A character with a Dexterity score of 0 is incapable of moving and is effectively immobile (but not unconscious).

You apply your character's Dexterity modifier to:

- Ranged attack rolls, including those for attacks made with bows, crossbows, throwing axes, and many ranged spell attacks like *scorching ray* or *searing light*.
- Armor Class (AC), provided that the character can react to the attack.
- Reflex saving throws, for avoiding *fireballs* and other attacks that you can escape by moving quickly.
- Acrobatics, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth checks.

#### Constitution (Con)

Constitution represents your character's health and stamina. A Constitution bonus increases a character's hit points, so the ability is important for all classes. Some creatures, such as undead and constructs, do not have a Constitution score. Their modifier is +0 for any Constitution-based checks. A character with a Constitution score of 0 is dead.

You apply your character's Constitution modifier to:

- Each roll of a Hit Die (though a penalty can never drop a result below 1—that is, a character always gains at least 1 hit point each time he advances in level).
- Fortitude saving throws, for resisting poison, disease, and similar threats.

If a character's Constitution score changes enough to alter his or her Constitution modifier, the character's hit points also increase or decrease accordingly.

#### Intelligence (Int)

Intelligence determines how well your character learns and reasons. This ability is important for wizards because it affects their spellcasting ability in many ways. Creatures of animal-level instinct have Intelligence scores of 1 or 2. Any creature capable of understanding speech has a score of at least 3. A character with an Intelligence score of 0 is comatose. Some creatures do not possess an Intelligence score. Their modifier is +0 for any Intelligence-based skills or checks.

TABLE 1-1: ABILITY SCORE COSTS

Score	Points	Score	Points
7	-4	13	3
8	-2	14	5
9	-1	15	7
10	0	16	10
11	1	17	13
12	2	18	17

TABLE 1-2: ABILITY SCORE POINTS

Campaign Type	Points
Low Fantasy	10
Standard Fantasy	15
High Fantasy	20
Epic Fantasy	25

TABLE 1-3: ABILITY MODIFIERS AND BONUS SPELLS

Ability Score	Modifier	Bonus Spells per Day (by Spell Level)										
		0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	
1	-5											Can't cast spells tied to this ability
2-3	-4											Can't cast spells tied to this ability
4-5	-3											Can't cast spells tied to this ability
6-7	-2											Can't cast spells tied to this ability
8-9	-1											Can't cast spells tied to this ability
10-11	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
12-13	+1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
14-15	+2	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
16-17	+3	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	
18-19	+4	—	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	
20-21	+5	—	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	
22-23	+6	—	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	—	
24-25	+7	—	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	—	
26-27	+8	—	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	—	
28-29	+9	—	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	
30-31	+10	—	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	
32-33	+11	—	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	
34-35	+12	—	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	
36-37	+13	—	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	
38-39	+14	—	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	
40-41	+15	—	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	
42-43	+16	—	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	
44-45	+17	—	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	
etc. ...												

You apply your character's Intelligence modifier to:

- The number of bonus languages your character knows at the start of the game. These are in addition to any starting racial languages and Common. If you have a penalty, you can still read and speak your racial languages unless your Intelligence is lower than 3.
- The number of skill points gained each level, though your character always gets at least 1 skill point per level.
- Appraise, Craft, Knowledge, Linguistics, and Spellcraft checks.

A wizard gains bonus spells based on his Intelligence score. The minimum Intelligence score needed to cast a wizard spell is 10 + the spell's level.

### Wisdom (Wis)

Wisdom describes a character's willpower, common sense, awareness, and intuition. Wisdom is the most important ability for clerics and druids, and it is also important for paladins and rangers. If you want your character to have acute senses, put a high score in Wisdom. Every creature has a Wisdom score. A character with a Wisdom score of 0 is incapable of rational thought and is unconscious.

You apply your character's Wisdom modifier to:

- Will saving throws (for negating the effects of *charm person* and other spells).

- Heal, Perception, Profession, Sense Motive, and Survival checks.

Clerics, druids, and rangers get bonus spells based on their Wisdom scores. The minimum Wisdom score needed to cast a cleric, druid, or ranger spell is 10 + the spell's level.

### Charisma (Cha)

Charisma measures a character's personality, personal magnetism, ability to lead, and appearance. It is the most important ability for paladins, sorcerers, and bards. It is also important for clerics, since it affects their ability to channel energy. For undead creatures, Charisma is a measure of their unnatural "lifeforce." Every creature has a Charisma score. A character with a Charisma score of 0 is not able to exert himself in any way and is unconscious.

You apply your character's Charisma modifier to:

- Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device checks.
- Checks that represent attempts to influence others.
- Channel energy DCs for clerics and paladins attempting to harm undead foes.

Bards, paladins, and sorcerers gain a number of bonus spells based on their Charisma scores. The minimum Charisma score needed to cast a bard, paladin, or sorcerer spell is 10 + the spell's level.