

# Take Initiative! Examples

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*My 1e campaigns use a hybrid of 1st and 2nd Edition initiative, permitting more specific and dynamic rounds. Players select an action, and calculate individual Initiative with modifiers. Although Initiative determines only "who goes first," those scenarios can become complicated.*

## Basics

A round consists of 20 "segments" determining order of events, but explicitly not equal time intervals. Each round the player declares an Action, rolls a d10 (Base Initiative), and applies modifier(s) (movement, weapon speed, spell casting time, etc.) to determine Initiative. Initiative determines which segment the action occurs, typically starting *and ending* on Initiative, although spell casting begins at the beginning of the round. If modifiers adjust Initiative > 20, the character will not act that round. Instead, they act the next round at: Total Initiative – 20.

Typical actions include: Attack (melee, ranged, non-weapon), Parry, Cast Spell, Move/Close (move with no combat), Charge (move with combat), Withdraw, Flee, Expect, Parley, Hide in Shadows, or Wait. See Appendix A for more details.

Some Actions can adapt with opponents' actions. If the declared action becomes impossible, characters can choose to do nothing or, sometimes, change their action mid-round by modifying their Initiative. If the character received damage the round of casting (or changing the action to casting a spell) prior to completion, the spell will fail unless they roll  $\geq$  a Save vs. Spell: ( d20 – [Spell Level] + [Level of Caster] – [Damage taken] ).

The following things always preclude changing the action:

- Casting a spell. The character can stop casting (ruining the spell) but they can't start a different action.
- The character chose to wait until the next round.
- The current segment is greater than Base Initiative (the initial d10). The character can possibly cease their action, or adapt in pre-specified ways, but can no longer change their action to a completely different action.
- Some circumstances result in the character acting prior to their Initiative. If the character has already acted, they can't act again or change their action.

While the GM moderates Initiative interactions, here are some more complex scenarios:

## 1. Change Action

*Up to Base Initiative, a character can change their planned action (except spell casting) if their action is no longer valid. They next act at: Base Initiative + 2 + new Initiative roll + modifiers for new action.*

Scenario: The character decides they will attack with a sword: ( 9 [d10 Base Initiative] + 5 [Weapon speed] ), attacking on segment 14. On segment 7, their only opponent is slain, leaving the character with nothing to do! On Base Initiative of 9, they change their action to move across the room: ( 9 [Base Initiative] + 2 [Change modifier] + 4 [new d10 initiative roll] + 8 [Move > ½ modifier] ) for a revised Total Initiative of 23—after the end of the round! Instead of acting this round, they will act the next round on segment 3: ( 23 [Total Initiative] – 20 ), without rolling Initiative.

## 2. Expecting Someone?

"Expect" a specific event (e.g., someone coming through a door) is a +5 initiative modifier. If the specific event occurs, the PC responds at: Initiative or current segment (whichever is greater) – 3 + new Initiative roll + modifiers (min. 1).

Scenario: Defender decides they will stand next to a door in order to attack an opponent expected to burst through. Defender Initiative is: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 5 [Expect modifier] ) for a total of 9. The door opens on segment 11. Defender responds on revised Initiative: ( 11 [current segment] + d10 [new Initiative roll] – 3 [Expect modifier] + [initiative modifier(s)] ).

This only applies if combat is underway. Prior to the initiation of combat, Surprise determines actions.

## 3. Parry

A character may substitute their attack with Parry. Base Initiative must be prior to opponent's total initiative for parry to work. A parry subtracts (half of the defender's level (+1 for single-classed Fighters) from one attack. Multiple attacks can be parried by single-class Fighters, with the penalty divided across attacks. Parry is not effective versus missile attacks (except for monks), or rear attacks. Parrying a potential Critical subtracts from the second roll (that determines critical success or failure).

Scenario: A 9th-level Fighter wielding two weapons is engaged with three orcs. Fighter has a –6 To Hit modifier for Parry, and decides to split it evenly across all three opponents.

Fighter decides to parry all orc attacks evenly (–2/–2/–2): ( d10 [Base Initiative], no modifier ).

Orcs melee attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 7 [Weapon Speed modifier] ).

- If Fighter loses Initiative, orcs attack as normal.
- If Fighter wins Initiative, Parry replaces his attack (with both primary and secondary weapons<sup>a</sup>). Each orc applies a –2 penalty to their To Hit roll, causing two orcs to miss. The other orc rolls a natural 20. To confirm the critical (per my [House Rules](#)), the orc rolls again with a –2 penalty To Hit (and without To Hit bonuses, e.g., Strength, Dex, magic items). If the second roll is still a hit, the blow will be a critical. If the second roll is a miss, the blow will be as normal.

<sup>a</sup>"The secondary weapon does not act as a shield or parrying device in any event", DMG, p. 70.

## 4. Flee

*Flee*: Move away at ≤ full movement with a –2 initiative modifier, providing the opponent a free melee attack with a +4 bonus To Hit but no movement. If a fleeing character has a higher Total Initiative, they can increase the distance from pursuers by an additional 1" × their Total Initiative once every turn.

The +4 bonus To Hit as they turn to flee incorporates the +2 rear bonus and the +2 stun bonus.

Scenario: Defender and Pursuer are in melee range (1").

Defender decides to flee: ( d10 [Base Initiative] – 2 [Flee modifier] ).

Pursuer decides to attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed] ).

### Flee Scenario 4a: Pursuer Wins Initiative

Pursuer attacks. Defender moves away (up to full movement). Pursuer makes a free attack on Defender Initiative with a +4 flee bonus To Hit, but cannot respond otherwise (having acted on Initiative).

## Flee Scenario 4b: Defender Wins Initiative

Pursuer makes an immediate free attack with a +4 flee bonus To Hit. Defender moves away (up to full movement + Initiative). If Pursuer wields a melee weapon usable at range (e.g., dagger), Pursuer can ranged attack on Initiative with a +2 rear bonus To Hit but penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range).

- If Pursuer Base Initiative > Defender Initiative, Pursuer can Change Action<sup>a</sup> at Base Initiative, and pursue Defender (up to full movement) on revised Initiative<sup>b</sup>: ( [Base Initiative] + d10 [new Initiative roll] + 2 [Change modifier] + 8 [Full Movement modifier] ). If revised Initiative is > 20, movement will occur the next round on Total Initiative –20; *must move towards Defender*.
- If Pursuer Base Initiative ≤ Defender Initiative, Pursuer cannot Change Action, but could melee with a different opponent within 1".

<sup>a</sup>Pursuer cannot Change Action to Charge, as they were engaged at the start of the round.

<sup>b</sup>Pursuit does not prompt a free attack by Defender, but could prompt a free attack by a separate opponent as they are fleeing from that opponent.

## 5. Pursuit

*If the fleeing character wins Initiative, they can increase the distance from pursuers by an additional 1" × their Initiative once every turn they flee. If the pursuer begins the round in melee range and attacks, combat is resolved as if their opponent is fleeing. If the fleeing character begins the round out of visual range, or in an area of "difficult" terrain, a roll (DMG, pp. 67-69) determines if evasion is successful.*

### Pursuit Scenario 5a: Pursuit

Evader moved the prior round, Pursuer is in pursuit > 1".

Both decide to continue to move: ( d10 [Initiative] + 8 [Move > ½ modifier] ).

Evader moves on Initiative. Once per 10 rounds, Evader can move an additional 1" × Initiative if they won Initiative.

Pursuer moves to Evader on Initiative, and completes round (limited to full movement) adjacent to Evader.

Note: If Evader wins Initiative, and turns corners on Initiative, they are out of sight of Pursuer—Pursuer will not know the direction!

### Pursuit Scenario 5b: Pursuer Stops and Attacks

Evader moved the prior round, Pursuer is in pursuit within 1".

Pursuer decides to attack *instead* of pursue: ( d10 [Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] ).

Evader decides to continue to flee: ( d10 [Initiative] – 2 [Flee modifier] ).

- If Pursuer wins Initiative, Pursuer attacks (with a +2 rear bonus To Hit). On Evader Initiative, Pursuer gains a free attack with a +4 flee bonus To Hit, but cannot move.
- If Pursuer loses Initiative, when Evader moves Pursuer gains an immediate free attack with a +4 flee bonus To Hit but cannot move. If Pursuer wields a melee weapon usable at range (e.g., hand axe), Pursuer can ranged attack with a +2 rear bonus To Hit but penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range).

## 6. Withdraw

*Withdraw/Disengage: Backing away from opponent at ½ Movement, still in melee if pursued.*

Scenario: Defender decides to Withdraw: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [ Move ≤ ½ modifier] ).

Pursuer decides to attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] ).

- If Pursuer wins Initiative, Pursuer attacks. Defender withdraws<sup>a</sup> up to ½ Movement. Pursuer can immediately follow (up to full movement); Defender attacks on Initiative if Pursuer follows and is within 1".
- If Defender wins Initiative, Defender withdraws up to ½ Movement<sup>b</sup>. If Pursuer follows on Initiative (up to full movement), Defender and then Pursuer attack if within 1".

<sup>a</sup>A character cannot withdraw into space occupied by opponents.

<sup>b</sup>Withdraw can be used in conjunction with Parry.

## 7. Withdraw Blocking

*Withdraw/Disengage: Backing away from opponent at ½ Movement, still in melee if pursued. If two or more attackers melee a single opponent and one attacker decides to withdraw, the remaining attacker can block the opponent's advance on a limited front.*

Scenario: Two defenders (Fallback and Blocker), *one* Pursuer.

Pursuer decides to attack Fallback: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] ).

Blocker decides to attack Pursuer (and block pursuit): ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] ).

Fallback decides to Withdraw: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [ Move ≤ ½ modifier] ).

### Withdraw Blocking Scenario 7a: Pursuer Wins Initiative

Pursuer attacks. Fallback withdraws up to ½ Movement. If Pursuer immediately follows (up to full movement), Fallback immediately attacks. Blocker attacks as Pursuer follows (with a +2 rear bonus To Hit), or on Initiative (whichever occurs first). Blocker cannot move.

### Withdraw Blocking Scenario 7b: Fallback Wins Initiative

Fallback withdraws up to ½ Movement.

- If Pursuer acts before Blocker, Pursuer can:
  - Change attack to Blocker (with no initiative modifier), and attack. Blocker attacks.
  - Follow Fallback on Initiative (up to full movement) and attack; Fallback immediately attacks. Blocker attacks as Pursuer follows (with a +2 rear bonus To Hit). Blocker cannot move.
- If Blocker acts before Pursuer, Blocker attacks while blocking pursuit. On Initiative, Pursuer can:
  - Change attack to Blocker (with no initiative modifier) and attack.
  - Attempt to Overrun Blocker (with no initiative modifier) in an attempt to follow Fallback; success permits the Pursuer to follow Fallback (up to full movement) but not attack. After a successful Overrun, Blocker must roll ≥ a Save vs. Paralyzation or be knocked down.

## 8. Ranged Combat

*Weapon Speed for bows/darts nocked & ready is +1, +7 arrows, +10 quarrels, +2 darts, +4 other thrown objects. Dex Attack bonus affects Ranged Initiative as well as To Hit.*

Calculations differ for ranged attacks during [aerial combat \(by hex\)](#), [naval combat \(by rounds\)](#), and [underwater combat \(by distance\)](#).

Scenario: Attacker and Defender are more than 10' (1") apart.

### Ranged Scenario 8a: Attacker Closes for Melee

Attacker decides to Close: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 or 8 [Movement modifier] ).

Defender decides to ranged attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] – [Dex Attack bonus] ).

Attacker will move but not attack. Defender attacks, with any To Hit bonus from Dex, but To Hit penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range).

### Ranged Scenario 8b: Attacker Moves and Ranged Attacks<sup>a</sup>

Attacker decides to Move  $\leq \frac{1}{2}$  and Ranged Attack, wielding a bow: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Move  $\leq \frac{1}{2}$  modifier] + 7 [Weapon Speed modifier]<sup>b</sup> – [Dex Attack bonus] ).

Defender decides to Ranged Attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] – [Dex Attack bonus] ).

Attacker fire rate halved; Defender fire rate as normal. Attacker moves and ranged attacks with To Hit penalized by the distance **after movement** (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range). Defender attacks, applying any To Hit bonus from Dex, but To Hit penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range).

<sup>a</sup>Opponent must be in view at the beginning of the round.

<sup>b</sup>Attacker can't be "nocked and ready" due to movement.

### Ranged Scenario 8c: Attacker and Defender Both Move and Range Attack at a Specific Range<sup>a</sup>

Round begins with neither combatant in range. Attacker decides to Move and Ranged Attack, wielding a bow: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 8 [Move modifier] + 7 [Weapon Speed modifier]<sup>b</sup> – [Dex Attack bonus] ), fire rate halved due to movement.

Defender decides to Move and Ranged Attack, wielding a wand: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 8 [Move modifier] + 4 [Wand Speed modifier] ).

Attacker declares they will fire at Range A. Defender declares they will fire at Range B.

The combatant who selected the farthest range attacks first, and will complete movement on their Initiative. Attacker moves and ranged attacks at Range A with To Hit penalized by the **current** distance (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range). Defender moves and attacks at Range B, applying any To Hit bonus from Dex, but To Hit penalized by the **current** distance (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range). Defender will fire at Range B, and complete movement on their Initiative.

<sup>a</sup>Opponent must be in view at the beginning of the round.

<sup>b</sup>Attacker can't be "nocked and ready" due to movement.

## 9. Charge

*Charge: When not engaged or Severely Encumbered, provides a single melee attack at the end of movement with: a 50% increase to Movement (max of 24"); a +2 bonus To Hit; a +4 init. modifier but attack order by weapon length; no DEX AC*

*bonus (characters with no DEX bonus lose one AC); double damage if mounted with lance or braced with spear or pole arm. Those charging must stop to engage unless mounted. May only charge once per turn.*

If Attacker wields a throwable melee weapon (e.g., spear), they can hurl it at their opponent on Initiative before entering melee. To Hit is penalized by the distance at the half-way point (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range), with no charge bonus To Hit. Defender still makes a melee attack on Attacker Initiative!

Scenario: Attacker and Defender begin the round more than 10' (1") apart. Attacker is not in melee (no opponents within 1").

### **Charge Scenario 9a: Defender Waits**

Attacker decides to Charge: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Defender decides to stand their ground and wait until next round: ( d10 [Base Initiative] ).

On Attacker Initiative both attack at Defender location in order by weapon length. Attacker has a +2 charge bonus To Hit. Defender attacks against Attacker Charge-modified AC (no Dex bonus to AC).

If Defender Initiative ( [ Base Initiative ] ) – 2 [Set To Receive modifier] ) is prior to Attacker's attack, Defender can Set to Receive Charge if wielding a spear or pole arm, and will cause 2× damage rolled on a successful To Hit roll.

Set to Receive Charge does not require changing action.

### **Charge Scenario 9b: Defender Blocks Advance**

Attacker decides to Shove past Defender: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Defender decides to block Attacker: ( d10 [Base Initiative] ).

Attacker and Defender trade attacks in order of weapon length. If Attacker successfully shoves/overbears Defender, then Defender is knocked aside and Attacker keeps moving (but will not be able to attack at the end of their charge); otherwise movement ends (see Fleeing for the next round). An armed Defender may make a single free armed attack when the unarmed attack is attempted.

If Defender wishes to actively prevent Attacker from passing, Defender can make an unarmed grappling attack (in response to the charge); if successfully grappled, Attacker cannot move. Defender cannot make both a free armed attack and an unarmed grappling attack.

### **Charge Scenario 9c: Defender Changes Weapon**

Attacker decides to Charge: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Defender decides to change weapons: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 10 [Change Weapon modifier] ).

- If Defender wins Initiative, both attack on Attacker Initiative in order by weapon length. Attacker has a +2 charge bonus To Hit. Defender attacks against Attacker Charge-modified AC. Defender can brace for a charge if wielding a spear or pole arm, and will cause 2× damage rolled on a successful To Hit roll.
- If Attacker wins Initiative, Attacker attacks; Defender does not (Defender still changing weapons). Attacker has a +2 charge bonus To Hit. Defender attacks on Initiative against Attacker Charge-modified AC. If Defender Initiative is > 20, Defender will not act until the next round at: Total Initiative – 20; Attacker AC will be as normal. *Defender cannot set to receive charge; they aren't wielding a weapon on Attacker Initiative.*

## Charge Scenario 9d: Defender Casts Spell

Attacker decides to Charge: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Defender decides to cast a spell: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 6 [Spell modifier] + [Spell Level] ).

- If Defender wins Initiative, the spell completes. Attacker attacks with a +2 charge bonus To Hit against Defender with no AC Dex bonus (due to spell casting).
- If Attacker wins Initiative, Attacker attacks with a +2 charge bonus To Hit against Defender with no Dex AC bonus (due to spell casting). If Attacker hits, the spell fails unless Defender rolls  $\geq$  a Save vs. Spell: ( d20 – [Spell Level] + [Level of Caster] – [Damage taken] ). Otherwise the spell completes on Defender Initiative.

## Charge Scenario 9e: Defender Ranged Attacks

Attacker decides to Charge: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Defender decides to ranged attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] – [Dex Attack bonus] ).

- If Defender wins Initiative, ranged To Hit is penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range) against Attacker Charge-modified AC.
- If Attacker wins Initiative, Defender attack is foiled unless the ranged weapon can also be used in melee (e.g., javelin). Attacker attacks with a +2 charge bonus To Hit; if Defender is capable of melee, Attack order is by weapon length and Defender attacks against Attacker Charge-modified AC.

## Charge Scenario 9f: Defender Leaves

Attacker decides to Charge: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Defender decides to move farther away from Attacker: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 8 [Move > ½ modifier] ).

- If Defender wins Initiative, Defender moves. Attacker charges towards Defender (up to full Charge movement). If Attacker reaches Defender, Attacker attacks with a +2 charge bonus and +2 rear bonus To Hit. Defender does not attack. See Pursuit for the next round.
- If Attacker wins Initiative, Attacker charges to Defender and attacks. Attacker has a +2 charge bonus To Hit. Defender can:
  - Immediately attack against Attacker Charge-modified AC in order by weapon length, but not move.
  - On Initiative, Withdraw up to ½ Movement towards their original destination. Attacker can immediately follow (up to full Charge movement). Defender attacks on Initiative if Attacker follows within 1".
  - On Initiative, move to their original destination. Attacker cannot follow nor free attack.



## Charge Scenario 9g: Come Together

If both Attacker and Defender Charge/Move directly towards each other, they arrive at the relative mid-point from the Attacker: ( (Attacker Movement / Defender Movement) × ( distance / 2 ) ) on the earliest Initiative, and attack in order by weapon length if either charged.

Scenario: Attacker & Defender Charge: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Charge modifier] ).

Both arrive at a location relative to their Charge movement on the earliest Initiative, and attack in order by weapon length. Both have a +2 charge bonus To Hit and attack against their opponent's Charge-modified AC.

Results are similar if Defender decides to Close: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 4 [Movement modifier] ) instead of Charge; Defender relative location is based on Defender non-Charge movement, with neither a Charge-modified AC nor bonus To Hit.



## Charge Scenario 9h: Attacker Ranged Attacks

Attacker decides to Charge and Ranged Attack (hurl weapon, etc.): ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] – [Dex Attack bonus] ).

Defender decides to ranged attack: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + [Weapon Speed modifier] – [Dex Attack bonus] ).

- If Attacker wins Initiative, Attacker range attacks; ranged To Hit is penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range). Attacker moves towards Defender. If Attacker fails to reach Defender, Defender then range attacks against Attacker Charge-modified AC penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range). Otherwise Defender can only attack if they have a weapon capable of melee.
- If Defender wins Initiative, Defender range attacks; ranged To Hit is penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range) against Attacker Charge-modified AC. Attacker range attacks at Initiative penalized by the distance on Initiative (–2 To Hit for medium range, –5 To Hit for long range) and moves to Defender.

## 10. Hide in Shadows

*Hiding in shadows is the ability to blend into dark areas, to flatten oneself, and by remaining motionless when in sight, to remain unobserved. ... Hiding in Shadows cannot be accomplished under direct observation. (PHB, p. 27-28).*

*Naturally, a creature closely pressed in melee is not likely to bother with looking for some thief not directly in the line of sight, but if vision would normally extend to the thief's area of activity, then observation rules apply. ... One cannot Hide in Shadows and Move (Silently) (DMG, p. 19).*

Scenario: A thief not hiding shadows desires to Hide in Shadows once combat is underway.

Round 1: The thief moves so as to break line of sight with their opponent at the end of the round (see also Flee, Pursuit, Withdraw).

Round 2: The thief attempts to Hide in Shadows on Initiative. If unobserved before Initiative and successful, they can no longer be perceived by normal means.

### Hide in Shadows Scenario 10a: Melee

Scenario: Attacker, previously hidden in shadows, melee attacks an opponent unaware of their presence within 10'.

Attacker attacks on their Initiative. If the Attacker wins Initiative, Defender can, if appropriate, change their Action.

### Hide in Shadows Scenario 10b: Charge

Scenario: Attacker, previously hidden in shadows, charges an opponent unaware of their presence (see also Charge).

Attacker attacks as appropriate for Charge:

- If Defender has acted, Attacker will move and attack on Attacker Initiative.
- If Defender has not yet acted, melee will occur on Attacker Initiative in order by weapon length.
- If Attacker wields a throwable melee weapon (e.g., spear), they can hurl it at their opponent on Initiative before entering melee range.



## Hide in Shadows Scenario 10c: Ranged

Scenario: Attacker, hidden in shadows, makes a ranged attack on an opponent unaware of their presence (see also Ranged).

Attacker ranged attacks on their Initiative. If Attacker wins Initiative, Defender can, if appropriate, change their Action.

*(Scenarios 10a, 10b, & 10c can also be handled by pausing Initiative at the end of a round, processing through Surprise, and then restarting Initiative).*

## 11. Location Matters

### Location Scenario 11a: Race

Attacker and Defender both decide to move to Point A: ( d10 [Initiative] + [Move or Charge modifier] ).

First to arrive is determined by Initiative. On an Initiative tie, both arrive simultaneously. Neither attacks unless one (or both) charged, in which case they attack in order by weapon length. Charging characters have a Charge-modified AC (no Dex bonus).

Note: A character can Charge to a location if there is no known opponent<sup>4</sup>, but has no To Hit bonus.

### Location Scenario 11b: Into the Fire(ball)

The most crucial initiative scenario involves movement during the casting of area-of-effect (AoE) spells. Historically I calculated movement segment-by-segment to determine the precise character location when the spell took effect. When creating these initiative scenarios, I realized that wasn't necessary! Let's break the possibilities down:

1. The character hasn't arrived at the AoE yet.
2. The character has already passed through the AoE.
3. The character is within the AoE.

Possibility 3 is typically the character location on one specific segment (the segment the spell is cast)—with few exceptions, a 10% chance. There's also one number on the character's Base Initiative d10 roll that would have Initiative tie—a 10% chance. Comparing the Initiative scores assigns the same probability as calculating segment-by-segment:

1. The character has a lower Initiative, acting before the spell is cast.
2. The character has a higher Initiative, acting after the spell is cast.
3. The character has a matching Initiative—Wrong place, wrong time.

We can remove calculating location segment-by-segment, making our admittedly complicated system a little less complicated.

In the case of spell AoE exceeding 1/10 of movement (roughly how far a creature moves from one segment to the next), expand the Initiative range from a simple tie to comparing the appropriate number of segments before and/or after Initiative.

Scenario: Fighter with a move of 12" decides to cross the room: ( d10 [Base Initiative] + 8 [Move > ½] ).

A mage decides to cast a fireball in the middle of the room with an unconstrained AoE of 4":

( d10 [Base Initiative] + 6 [Spell modifier] + [Spell Level] ).

The fireball detonates at Mage Initiative. Fighter Initiative equals Mage Initiative  $\pm$  1 (representing 36' of movement). Fighter is (literally) caught in the crossfire! Fighter rolls a Save vs. Spell at Mage Initiative, and then completes movement on Initiative (should they survive!).

## Glossary

- Base Initiative: a d10 roll.
- Charge: Move up to 150% of Movement, and attack *once* that round.
- Close: Move (up to normal Movement) safely into melee range with an opponent; neither opponent melee attacks (unless the opponent Charges).
- Charge-adjusted AC: AC without Dexterity Defensive Adjustment, or +1 to AC if the character has no Dexterity Defensive Adjustment.
- Flee: A round of full movement when leaving melee, providing the opponent a free melee attack at +4 To Hit.
- Free attack: An additional attack from specific circumstances.
- Overrun: One or more characters attempting to push through one or more opponents. A contested [Close Combat Check](#) roll.
- Round: One combat instance divided into 20 segments defining order of events. If several creatures act in the same segment, action is simultaneous.
- Tie Initiative: Both actions happen simultaneously.
- Total Initiative: The initiative roll including all initiative modifiers (e.g., movement, weapon speed), referred to as "Initiative" for that individual.
- Turn: 10 rounds; Turn Undead; turn (to flee).
- Win Initiative: Have the lower Initiative.

Note the various movement types (e.g., Move, Charge, Flee, Withdraw) are mutually exclusive.

## References

TSR 2011, *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 1979.

<sup>4</sup>*Swords & Spells*, 1979.

*Dragon Magazine*, Issue 71, "Attack Priority System offers more Realism without more Work," March 1986.

## Appendix A—Actions

- Melee: "I attack the ogre in front of me."
- Charge: "I charge the ogre on the other of the room" (with associated bonuses and penalties).
- Cast Spell: "I cast fireball 30' into the room."
- Expect: "If they come through the door I'll attack."
- Wait: "I wait until next round to see what they do."
- Parley: "I tell them, 'We come in peace, can we be friends? We offer you gold!'"
- Hide in Shadows: "I don't think I'm observed. I attempt to Hide in Shadows."

Each round typically consists of one "normal" action per character. Circumstances can permit modifying or changing a normal action, or even permit a "free" additional action. Normal actions in a round include: all forms of attack (ranged, melee, non-weapon, back stab, assassination), parrying, standing up, picking up a weapon, lighting a torch, binding

wounds, casting a spell, reading a scroll, Turn Undead, druid form change, using a magic item, listening at a door, an attempt to open a stuck door, opening a known secret door, hiding in shadows, moving more than half movement, mounting/dismounting (unless cavalier or proficient), climbing an obstacle, searching a 10' area for a secret door, searching a door or chest for a trap, searching a creature, getting an object from an (open) pack, attempting to parley, paladin healing, etc.

A round is movement (if any) followed by an action. Actions in the context of movement typically require half movement: Mounting a horse, moving through an unstuck/unlocked closed door, overrunning an opponent, etc.

Each round a character can also perform one "minor" action (applying any appropriate initiative modifier(s)) interacting with an object or feature in the environment. Two minor actions constitute a normal action, regardless of Initiative. Minor actions prevent multiple-attack capabilities. Minor actions are typically those necessary activities required for a normal action. Examples include: open or close an unlocked/unstuck door, spike a door, draw or change a weapon, drop pack or other equipment, open a backpack, pick a pocket ("minor" because it can be attempted twice in a round), get spell components (or other item) from pouch, unroll a scroll, quaff a potion, etc. One can make small, slow, careful movements once hiding in shadows and remain hidden: draw a weapon, uncork a potion, pick a pocket, etc.

Some actions can require more than one round. Potions take effect after an additional  $d4+1$  segments. Donning or removing armor takes: (  $10 - \text{Armor AC}$  ) rounds (e.g., removing Leather Armor AC 8 takes 2 rounds). Picking a lock or disarming a trap takes  $d4$  rounds. Thoroughly searching a 10'x10' area takes a turn (10 rounds). Figuring out how to open a secret door takes a turn. The gnome and dwarf underground abilities require a turn to discern the available information.

## APPENDIX B—INITIATIVE MODIFIERS

### CHARACTER ACTION INIT. MODIFIER

#### Movement

Charging (+50% MV, no DEX)	+4
Movement (Prevents casting, normal melee)	
Movement > 10', ≤ ½ Movement	+4
* <b>Movement &gt; ½ Movement</b>	+8
* <b>Turn to Flee (free attack at +4)</b>	-2
* <b>Standing Up</b>	<b>Round</b>

#### Environment

Hindered (Tangled/Climbing/Held)	+3
On Higher Ground	-1
Opening a door	+6

#### Weapon

<b>*Use of Weapon</b>	<b>+Weapon Speed<sup>1</sup></b>
Multiple melee targets	+1 for each, End of Round
Draw Weapon <sup>2,4</sup>	+4
Change Weapon <sup>3,4</sup>	+10
Sheath Weapon <sup>4,5</sup>	+6
Drop Weapon	+2
* <b>Pick up Weapon</b>	+8
Parry	0
Set to Receive Charge	-2

#### Magic

* <b>Turn Undead</b>	+6
* <b>Breath Weapon/ At Will</b>	+2
* <b>Casting a Spell<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>+6 + Spell Lvl</b>
(except spells > 1 round = as normal)	
* <b>Scroll</b>	<b>As Spell +6</b>
* <b>Other Magic Item</b>	+4
Potion effect	d4+1
Slowed <sup>7</sup>	-

#### Other

Wake up	+8
Hide in Shadows	+8
Infravision	+5 <sup>8</sup>
Expect <something>	+5
Change Action	+2+Init Reroll+Action
Respond to Specific Event	-3+Init Reroll+Action
* <b>Unarmed Attack/Action, S/M/L</b>	+2/+3/+5

#### *Notes:*

##### \***Primary Action—no further actions**

<sup>1</sup>SF for bows/darts nocked/ready is +1, +7 arrows, +10 quarrels, +2 darts, +4 other thrown objects. If MV, fire rate halved. Dex Attack bonus affects Init. Grenade-like AC:5.

<sup>2</sup>Characters with IAIJUTSU do not suffer this modifier.

<sup>3</sup>Characters with IAIJUTSU in *both* weapons are +5.

<sup>4</sup>Changing/drawing weapons prevents 2<sup>nd</sup> attack.

<sup>5</sup>Characters with IAIJUTSU have this halved.

<sup>6</sup>(+8 + Spell Lvl) without spell cards. Max 20.

<sup>7</sup>**Slowed move/attack at one-half of the current rate.**

<sup>8</sup>Choose to swing before or after, prior to init, DMG p.59