Open Campaign Rules

These rules are designed for a campaign that spans locations days, weeks and even months apart. They are given below in order of *priority*: so that the most valuable come first.

Each rule is marked *p* or *a*. The former have been tested in live play and represent the most robust versions. The latter have been tested only in simulations, so are more likely to see revision.

Contents

Slower Recovery

Concerns are to suit a time scale of days or more, amplify the consequences of attritional encounters, and ameliorate the economic and strategic impact of high-level spells.

Breather *p*

A breather is a period of downtime, at least 1 hour long, during which a character performs no more than lowkey activity such as reading, talking, eating, drinking or standing watch. If it is interrupted by adventuring activity—fighting, casting spells, marching, or similar—characters must start the rest over to gain any benefit from it.

At the end of a breather, characters can spend Hit Dice to regain hit points. Those who eat and drink, and sleep or trance in comfort can also reduce exhaustion by one category.

Short Rest *p*

A breather in which characters sleep or trance can be extended into a short rest of about a day. At the end of that rest, characters who prepare spells can change their

lists, and features that can refresh at the end of a short rest, do so. Those that eat and drink recover one level of exhaustion.

Long Rest *p*

A short rest can be extended into a long rest of around three days. A character must have at least 1 hit point at the start of such a rest to gain its benefits, and must sleep or trance each day.

At the end of that rest, characters regain all lost hit points, and they regain spent Hit Dice up to half their total number of them (at least 1); any features they have that can refresh at the end of a long rest, do so. Those that eat and drink recover completely from exhaustion.

Between Rests *p*

When characters finish a rest incorporating a given type, they can't benefit from another rest of that type until time equal to its duration has passed, e.g. characters finishing a short rest can't benefit from a breather for an hour.

Sleeping and Trancing, and Armor *p*

Characters who sleep need 8 hours to do so, while those who trance need only 4. Warlocks benefiting from Aspect of the Moon can spend 4 hours reading their Book of Shadows instead of sleeping.

Characters sleeping or trancing in medium or heavy armor aren't comfortable. At the end of an uncomfortable rest, characters regain only a quarter of spent Hit Dice and don't reduce exhaustion.

Hiding & Blindness

Concerns are to have mechanically consistent sight-based play, that does not strain disbelief.

Unseen, but not Unheard *p*

Being unseen bestows advantage or disadvantage depending on who is blinded towards whom. Even when you can't see a creature, you still know its location from the noise it makes: allowing you to target it with ranged and melee attacks.

If you know an attacking creature's location, they will stop being unseen as soon as they create line of sight to attack you, unless they are heavily-obscured or invisible.

Blinded *p*

Attackers have advantage on their attack rolls against blinded creatures *that they can see*.

Each foot of movement while blinded costs 1 extra foot of speed. To Dash you must

make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (DC 12) or fall prone, unless you are in contact with a sighted guide.

Unseen and Unheard: Hiding *p*

Being hidden forces attackers to choose the square they think you are in when they attack you: automatically missing if incorrect. Successfully hiding results in you being unseen, unheard, and your location not known.

You can take the Hide action if you are—

- **Free** to obfuscate your location, such as when you are not confined or restrained; *and*
- **Heavily-obscured** by such things as darkness, opaque fog, or dense foliage; *or*
- **Concealed** by objects that block vision entirely, such as creatures two sizes larger than you; *or*
- **Unobserved** such as when a creature is distracted; *or*
- **Unseen** such as through an *invisibility* spell or a class ability.

You stop being hidden if you are in a creature's field of vision under circumstances that would prevent you attempting to hide from it, or make sounds that it can hear, attack it or do something else to make your location known to it.

Ability Checks

Concerns are to forestall characters queuing up for skill checks or stacking buffs with optimal efficiency.

Qualifying for and Helping with Checks *p*

Some ability checks can only be attempted with tools or proficiency, or both. When a check fails, it usually can't be reattempted until conditions change, which could be a new approach or increased proficiency.

Usually the character with the highest ability modifier makes the check, and one character with proficiency in the relevant tool or skill can help by also making a check.

Group Ability Checks *p*

These are used sparingly, for example a party attempt at stealth would require individual checks.

Modifying Checks *p*

Checks are made at an indeterminate moment over the duration of effort, so *bardic inspiration*, *divination*, *guidance* or *lucky* can be applied provided the character applying them is ready to go for that entire duration. This means—

- Characters with *divination*, *guidance*, *lucky* or *peerless skill* can apply the bonus

to their own work;

- Characters with *divination*, *guidance*, or *bardic inspiration*, can give up doing work of their own, to be on hand to apply the bonus to another's work;
- A skilled helper can give up doing work of their own, to be on hand to make a supplementary check.

Revised Feats

Concerns are to make more combat strategies viable.

Defensive Duelist *a*

You have become adroit at parrying attacks and riposting savagely. You gain the following benefits—

- When you are wielding a *Finesse* or *Versatile* melee weapon with which you are proficient and another creature hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to add your proficiency bonus to your AC for that attack, potentially causing the attack to miss you;
- If it does, when you hit that creature with a melee weapon before the end of your next turn, you can reroll the damage dice and use either total.

Dual Wielder *a*

You master fighting with two weapons, gaining the following benefits—

- You gain a +1 bonus to AC while you are wielding a separate melee weapon in each hand;
- You can use two-weapon fighting even when the one-handed melee weapons you are wielding aren't *Light*;
- The two-weapon fighting attack you make with the melee weapon in your other hand, *doesn't require* a bonus action;
- You can draw or stow two one-handed weapons when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one.

Sharpshooter *a*

You have mastered ranged weapons and can make shots that others find impossible. You gain the following benefits—

- Attacking at long range doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged weapon attack rolls;
- Your ranged weapon attacks ignore half and three-quarters cover;
- Before you make an attack with a *Heavy* ranged weapon you are proficient with, you can choose to take a −5 penalty to the attack roll: if the attack hits, you add +10 to the attack's damage.

Tavern Brawler *p*

Accustomed to rough-and-tumble fighting using whatever weapons happen to be at hand, you gain the following benefits—

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20;
- You are proficient with improvised weapons;
- You gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with your unarmed strikes;
- You can use a bonus action on your turn for a special melee attack to grapple a creature.

Mortality

Concerns are to make costs matter to the party economy, and relate culture and metaphysics to mechanics.

Dying *p*

Characters gain XP for every encounter they participate in, even if they die in that encounter.

If they suffer instant death, or for each death saving throw they would fail with none remaining, they must make a Constitution saving throw. The DC is 12, or half the damage taken, whichever is higher. On a failure, an organ is destroyed making revival more difficult.

Old Age *p*

Death from old age underpins the role of the Material plane as a unique source of new souls. Through dying, or sometimes through magical travel, those souls migrate out to other planes. Revival spells, including *raise dead* and *reincarnate*, automatically fail if cast on a creature that has died of old age.

Soul's Departure and Undeath *p*

Souls take about a minute to depart the Material plane, and then journey to an Outer plane—either that of the god or entity that they are bound to, or the one they feel drawn to by their alignment. The vacant corpse is often then incinerated, to forestall interference.

Undeath involves a twisted soul from the Shadowfell being summoned to possess the corpse, defiling it. This renders the dead more difficult to revive and results in good cultures condemning Necromancers.

Obligations toward the Dead *p*

In most societies there is no legal obligation to preserve or revive the dead, although private contracts and wills can mandate it.

If *gentle repose* is in effect on the dead, heirs typically cannot claim their estate until

the eleventh day after it lapses. The eleventh day is also significant as in many places it marks the end of moral obligations to seek revival.

Casting Costs *p*

Unless a character or allied NPC is casting the spell gratis, on top of the price of any components a fee must be paid to the caster. Typically as per the table below—

Spell	Component	Fee	Total	Availability
Lesser Restoration	0gp	25gp	25gp	Common service
Greater Restoration	100gp	25gp	125gp	Uncommon service
Raise Dead	500gp	250gp	750gp	Uncommon service
Reincarnation	1000gp	250gp	1250gp	Uncommon service
Resurrection	1000gp	500gp	1500gp	Rare service
True Resurrection	25,000gp	5,000gp	30,000gp	Legendary quest

Retirement *p*

Players can voluntarily retire their character. They can suggest a course of action for that character, but the DM controls it. Such characters aren't indestructible: they can die.

Characters don't earn XP while retired, but might be able to perform downtime activities. A retired character may resume play in some circumstances, determined by the DM.

Replacement Characters *p*

Each player can control only one character at a time. Replacements are created with the minimum XP needed to start at the bottom of the level below that of the lowest-level persisting character.

Those starting at tier 2 or higher have equipment per the "*Low Magic Campaign*" setting in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Magic Use

Concerns are to present a world where creatures have evolved with magic both present and critically relevant to survival, and to reduce or delimit the impact of some spells.

Noticing Magic *p*

Most creatures have evolved to intuitively notice spell casters and magic items as a matter of survival. They are usually aware of magic affecting them, especially if such magic changes the way they act, look or feel.

Fantasy Grounds Area of Effect *p*

Measure areas orthogonally from centre to centre (of square). Ranges are not measured in squares.

Healing Spirit *p*

Can heal only one creature per round.

Polymorph *p*

Choose a table appropriate to your background from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* to determine which beasts you have a sufficient knowledge of to choose as a form.

When you encounter a new beast, you can spend an hour to study it and then make Nature (Intelligence) check against a DC set by the DM (typically 15). Success adds that beast to those you can choose as forms.

Shapechanging and Conditions *p*

Assuming a new form or transforming into one does not create a new creature, so pre-existing conditions persist except where the new form is immune to them, or where appropriate, to their cause.

Characters

Concerns are to offer a game difficulty above the default, broaden viable strategies, and extend levelling careers over months or years to suit the open campaign mode of play.

PHB + XGE *p*

In addition to the *Player's Handbook*, you can use *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* to create your character. Players can't confer while creating characters.

Character Generation *a*

A deck of eighteen cards is used to generate ability scores; comprising five "**2**"s, four "**3**"s, four "**4**"s, and five "**5**"s.

Draw (without replacement) and sum three cards for each ability, allocating in order drawn. All eighteen cards will be used—once each—to yield six scores from 6 to 15 that collectively sum to 63.

Note down your base scores as they could be relevant later, e.g. if your character is reincarnated, and then choose class, race and background in any order.

Training Downtime *a*

To gain a level, characters must undertake training downtime with a higher-level character who shares their class or archetype. The tier the level falls in sets the downtime duration and typical fee.

Training must be in whole days, which need not be contiguous: the level is gained at the finish of the last day. This is conditioned on the time not the fee… so trainers might want payment before completion.

Tier	Time	Fee
1	10 days	20 gp
2	20 days	200 gp
3	30 days	1500 gp
4	40 days	10,000 gp

A trainer can train a number of students concurrently equal to six minus their tier.

Increasing your Hit Point Maximum *p*

If you choose to roll your Hit Die to increase your hit point maximum, reroll any die that comes up 1.

Human Racial Trait *p*

Humans gain the "**Schooled**" racial trait, which reads as follows—"You gain one feat. The feat can be *actor*, *athlete*, *linguist*, *prodigy* or *tavern brawler*."

Variant-human *p*

Variant-human is not used.

Monk Class Feature *a*

Monks gain the "**Refocus**" feature, which reads as follows—"Starting at 5th level, you can push yourself beyond your normal limits for a moment. On your turn, you can take one additional bonus action. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again. Starting at 17th level, you can use it twice before a rest, but only once on the same turn."

Ranger

Favoured Enemy and Natural Explorer *a*

"**Favoured Enemy**" is modified by the following—"Whenever you would choose one type of favoured enemy, choose two types instead. Alternatively, if you would choose two races of humanoid, choose three races instead. You can also defer making a choice, to do so later at the finish of a short or long rest taken after encountering the type of enemy you will choose."

"**Natural Explorer**" is modified by the following—"Whenever you would choose one type of favoured terrain, choose two types instead. Add "aquatic" to types. You can also defer making a choice, to do so later at the finish of a short or long rest taken in the type of terrain you will choose."

Primeval Awareness *a*

"**Primeval Awareness**" is modified, by the following—"When you focus your awareness on the region around you, you can choose not to expend a spell slot. If you do, you can sense creatures using this feature for 1 minute and then cannot do so again until you finish a long rest."

"Can't become lost…" *p*

A ranger cannot fail Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate: once given a direction they can unerringly keep to it and always know their way back to where they started.

They still require information to give them a correct heading in the first place. Magic can interfere with this ability, causing a ranger to veer off their heading or lose their sense of where they started.

Combat

As with adventuring, concerns are to clarify some glitchy or abusable situations that can arise during play.

Individual Surprise and Immunity to Surprise *p*

Surprise is determined for party-members individually: some may be surprised, while others are not.

Combatants that are immune to surprise can't suffer the *effects* of surprise, but don't receive free passes on Perception: if they win initiative they might have limited information on which to base their actions.

Squeezing Past a Foe *p*

When a creature squeezes past a foe, that foe can force a contest between its Strength (Athletics) and the creature's choice of its Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics). If it loses, the creature stays in the space it is squeezing from. Creatures two or more sizes larger than a foe can't be blocked this way.

Adventuring

Concerns are to clarify some glitchy or abusable situations that can arise during play.

Retrieving Items *p*

Stowing or retrieving an attached item, or one in a case, quiver or pouch takes a free interaction (or for ammunition, may be drawn as part of an attack). Getting one out from a backpack or bag takes an action.

Swimming in Armor *p*

Armor that disadvantages Dexterity (Stealth) also disadvantages Strength (Athletics) checks made to swim.

Jumping *p*

Effects that multiply your jump distance multiply the number of feet you can cover due to Strength, but typically don't change your speed or movement: limiting you to covering the lesser of your speed or your distance for Strength. You can jump more than once as part of your movement.

Long jump—with a running start the DC is 2 per foot over your usual distance, or 4 per foot without.

High jump—with a running start the DC is 1 per inch over your usual distance, or 2 per inch without.

Ammunition *p*

After each attack, a ranged weapon with the *Ammunition* property is unloaded. Provided you have a hand free, you can load it with a free interaction or as part of an attack with that weapon.

Cartography *p*

When making a map, simply note the area charted or route recorded (no ability check required).

Two kinds of map are used—"**area**" and "**route**". A map of an *area* gives advantage on ability checks to navigate in that area. A map recording a *route* to a location permits a navigator to choose that location as their destination.

Some areas and locations defy attempts to map them due to complex or ambiguous terrain, or magic. In either case a cartographer can attempt to overcome such difficulties by making an Intelligence (Cartography) check against a DC set by the DM. The Underdark exemplifies such areas, e.g. the Darklake may be up to DC 25.

Perception versus Investigation *p*

Perception is to notice something such as "a suspicious length of wall". Investigation is to infer what that thing implies such as "it is a secret door that can be opened thusly".

Skills Relating to Creature Lore

Concerns are to bring the effect of checks into line with character class benefits.

Which Skill to Apply? *p*

Arcana—Aberrations, Celestials, Constructs, Fiends, most Monstrosities

History—Most Humanoids

Nature—Beasts, Dragons, Elementals, Fey, Giants, Oozes, Plants

Religion—Undead

Time and Difficulty Class *p*

It usually takes one minute to recall lore comprising multiple facts. A fact in isolation can be recalled by taking an action to reflect. Helpers must also spend a minute or an action. For concrete information about creatures, the following DCs are typical—

Difficulty	DC	Lore Recalled
Very Easy	5	
Easy	10	Creature type and usual alignment; languages
Moderate	15	Damage immunities, resistances or vulnerabilities; condition immunities; senses; movement types; regional effects
Hard	20	If a creature is your equal or superior in Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, AC, current HP or class levels in your class; actions; skills; traits
Very Hard	25	If a creature is your equal or superior in Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, total class levels; legendary actions
Nearly Impossible	30	Spells; saving throws; lair actions

Hiring Fees *p*

Whereas a Skilled Hireling of Tier 0 to 1 commonly charges 2gp/day, those at higher tiers expect more. The scaling factor is roughly 5x per tier, so that—

Tier 0-1 = from 2sp to 2gp/day

Tier 2 = ~10gp/day (independently wealthy lifestyle sustainable*)

Tier 3 = ~50gp/day (independent aristocratic lifestyle sustainable*)

Tier 4 = ~250gp/day (might sustain up to a hundred followers)

Epic = *priceless!*

*Family properties could sustain a noble or inheritor at a level well-above their class-equivalent tier.