

Initiative Cards v2.0 (Fantasy)

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Introduction

Keeping track of initiative in games using the d20 System can get complicated. Every GM has a method that he or she favors, but which sometimes lacks in versatility or utility. These Initiative Cards provide GMs both with an easy way to keep track of initiative, and a handy reference for all the sorts of information a GM sometimes needs during a game session.

There are three different types of Initiative Cards:

- **Character cards**—which contain information about the player characters and the occasional non-player character. You can use these cards for familiars as well.
- **Monster cards**—which contain information about monsters (though it's best to use character cards for monsters that have class levels). You can use these cards for most animal companions as well.
- **End of Round card**—which lets the GM know when to resolve end of round effects.

Initiative Cards in Play

Before beginning play, fill out one Initiative Card for each opponent the PCs are likely to face during the coming session. If you have a current copy of the PCs' character sheets, fill one out for each PC, if not ask each player to fill one out at the start of the game.

When combat begins, ask the players to roll initiative while you roll initiative for any opponents and non-player characters. Set aside any cards for characters or creatures that are surprised. One by one, go around the table and ask each player for his or her character's initiative result. Write their initiative numbers down in the space marked "INIT" on the cards. Then do the same for all the initiative rolls you make. Use a pencil—you'll be erasing and rewriting these numbers fairly often.

Then simply begin at the top of the stack, moving each card to the bottom when that character or creature has concluded its turn. When you reach the End of Round card, check for any end of round effects (for example, unconscious characters attempting to stabilize), then begin the next round. If you have characters or creatures who have not yet rolled initiative, before proceeding with the next round ask them to roll for initiative, jot down their initiative numbers, and place their cards in the proper place in the initiative order.

If a character or creature delays, or readies an action, turn that Initiative Card sideways, with the "Delay/Ready" box showing. If a character or creature falls unconscious, simply turn the card sideways facing the other direction, with the word "Unconscious" visible.

Character Cards

Use character cards for player characters, non-player characters, familiars, and monsters that have classes and levels.

NAME: Record the character's name here.

ALIGN/RACE: Record the character's alignment and race here. The former may be useful for spells that work off of a character's alignment, such as protection from good; the latter is useful for spells, effects, and situations that take the character's race into consideration. If you're using the character card to represent a familiar, record the animal's species (cat, hawk, rat, weasel, etc.) here.

INIT: Leave this space blank at first. When combat begins, use it to record the character's initiative roll.

AC: Record the character's base armor class here, including AC for touch attacks (TCH)—attacks that disregard armor—and for attacks when the character is flatfooted (FLT). There is also a box in which you can mark any temporary changes to the character's AC (TMP) that occur during the course of the game.

CLS/LVL: Record the character's classes and levels here. If the character has several classes, you might want to use abbreviations: Brb for Barbarian, Clr for Cleric, or Wiz for Wizard, for example.

Delay or Ready: Turning the card so this space is showing indicates the character is delaying or has readied an action.

STR, DEX, CON, INT, WIS, and CHA: Record the character's ability scores and ability modifiers here.

FORT, REF, and WILL: Record the character's Fortitude, Reflex, and Will saving throws here.

SPD: Record the character's base movement here.

VIS: Record any special vision modes the character might have, such as low-light vision, darkvision, or blindsight. If the vision mode has a range, make sure you note that, such as "Dark 60."



The Character Card

UNCONSCIOUS

Skills: Record the total skill modifiers (skill rank + ability modifier + miscellaneous modifiers) here. This area lists only those skills for which the Dungeon Master should regularly make skill checks on the player's behalf. (See the DMG, page 17.) In addition to their use for recording skills that are not already included, the blank skill spaces can be used to record other score-based information, such as Spell Resistance.

Languages: Record the languages the character knows here. This could come in handy when the characters encounter speech or writing in a language other than Common. (You can check which of the characters might understand without having to ask the players which languages each character knows.)

Special/Notes: Use this space to record any temporary effects on the character, such as spells or the special attacks of monsters, and to keep track of the duration of such effects.

Unconscious: Turning the card so this space is showing indicates that the character is unconscious.

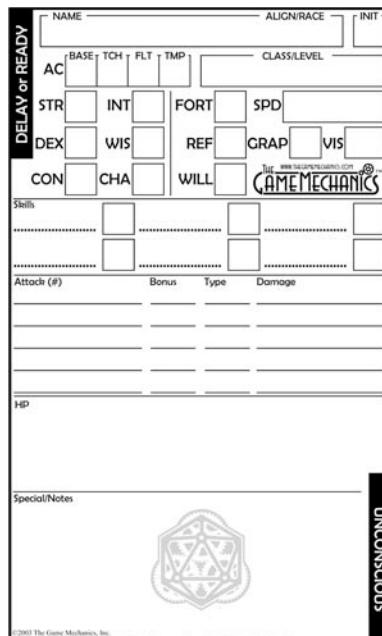
Monster Cards

Use monster cards for monsters that don't have classes and levels. You can use one card to represent multiple monsters of the same type (one card to stand for three ogres, for example), or you can use individual cards for individual monsters.

NAME: Record the monster's name here. You can use one card to represent a number of identical monsters, or use separate cards for each according to your own preferences.

ALIGN: Record the monster's alignment here. Knowing the monster's alignment could be important for spells that key off of a character's alignment, such as protection from evil.

INIT: Leave this space blank at first. When combat begins, use it to record the character's initiative roll.



The Monster Card

Delay or Ready: Turning the card so this space is showing indicates the character is delaying or has readied an action.

AC: Record the monster's base armor class here, including AC for touch attacks (TCH)—attacks that disregard armor—and for attacks when the character is flat-footed (FLT). There is also a box in which you can mark any temporary changes to the monster's AC (TMP) that occur during the course of the game.

INIT: Record the monster's initiative modifier here.

FORT, REF, and WILL: Record the monster's Fortitude, Reflex, and Will saving throws here.

SPD: Record the monster's base movement here. If the monster has other movement modes, record those as well, with a brief notation such as "Fly 50/Swim 40."

VIS: Record any special vision modes the character might have, such as low-light vision, darkvision, or blindsight. If the vision mode has a range, make sure you note that, such as "Dark 60."

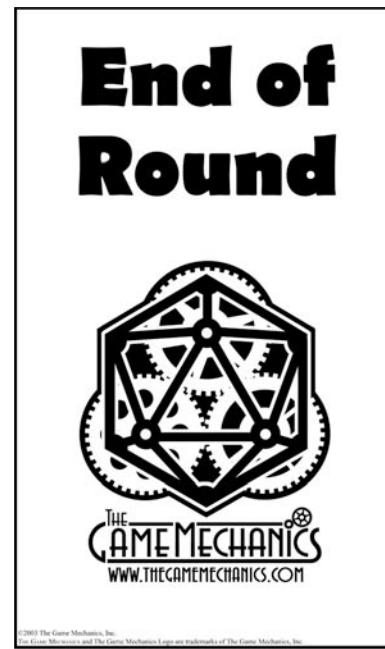
GRAP: Record the monster's grapple bonus here.

Skills: Record skills and total skill modifiers (skill rank + ability modifier + miscellaneous modifiers) here. Unlike Character Cards, no specific skills are listed in this area. In addition to their use for recording skills, these spaces can be used to record other score-based information, such as Spell Resistance.

Attacks: Record the monster's attacks here. Spaces are included for Attack (#) (the method of attack, such as "Bite," "2 Claws," or "Sword"); Bonus (the attack modifier); Type (the type of damage: "P" for piercing, "B" for bludgeoning, and "S" for slashing); and Damage (the damage caused by the attack).

HP: Use this space to keep track of the monster's hit points.

Special/Notes: Use this space to record any temporary effects on the monster, such as



The End of Round Card

spells or the special attacks of other monsters, and to keep track of the duration of such effects.

Unconscious: Turning the card so this space is showing indicates the character is unconscious.

End of Round Card

The End of Round card lets the GM keep track of when each round finishes, for purposes of effects that take place at the end of the round (such as unconscious characters attempting to stabilize).

Example of Play

A combat begins in Rich's game—the characters encounter a group of five orcs led by an ogre, who also has a brown bear for a pet. Rich tells the players to roll initiative for their characters, while he rolls for the monsters. Since Rich has prepared his Initiative Cards for the monsters in advance, all he has to do is pull out the cards, check the initiative modifiers, and roll 1d20 each for the orcs, the ogre, and the bear. For convenience, Rich is using a single initiative roll for all five orcs. This also lets him track them using just one card. The orcs get a total of 14, the ogre gets a 19, and the bear gets only a 2. Rich puts these in order, from highest to lowest: the ogre, the orcs, and the bear.

The players tell Rich what they rolled for initiative: Wendy, playing Kessa, gets a 9; Joanna, playing Alwyn, gets a 23; Alex, playing Tyrian, gets a 24; and JD, playing Cromagh, gets a 13. As the players tell Rich their initiatives, he puts them in place, so the final initiative order looks like this: Tyrian (24), Alwyn (23), the ogre (19), the orcs (14), Cromagh (13), Kessa (9), and finally the bear (2). Rich then puts the End of Round card at the bottom of the stack, under the bear.

Tyrian, the monk, doesn't want to charge into the midst of the enemy, so he delays. Rich

NAME		ALIGN/RACE		INIT
Brown Bear		TN		
AC	15	TOH	FLT	TMP
STR	27	INT	2	FORT +9 SPD 40
DEX	13	WIS	12	REF +6 GRAP +16 VIS
CON	19	CHA	6	WILL +3
Skills		The Game Mechanics		
Listen	+4	Spot	+7	Swim +14
Abilities				
Attack (R) Claw (2)	Bonus +11	Type M	Damage 1d8+8	
Bite	+6	M	2d8+4	
ACTIONS				
HP 51				
Special/Notes				
Improved Grab Scent				
ACTIONS				
UNCONSCIOUS				
Special/Notes				

turns Tyrian's card 90 degrees to the right, leaving the "Delay or Ready" indicator showing. He then moves Tyrian's card nearly to the back, just in front of the End of Round card. A character can't delay past the end of the round, so this reminds Rich to make sure that Tyrian takes his action before the end of the round.

Next up is Alwyn, the rogue, who attacks with her bow, but misses. Rich moves her card to the back of the stack, after the End of Round card. Then comes the ogre, who charges Cromagh, the barbarian. The ogre's attack only has to beat Cromagh's flat-footed Armor Class, since Cromagh hasn't acted yet.

The orcs attack next, and Rich decides that the three in front wade into battle, while the two in the back ready actions to fire arrows at anyone who starts casting spells. Since Rich is only using one card for all of the orcs, he resolves the attacks for the three who entered melee, then pencils in a "2" on their card, and turns it to the right—indicating that two of the orcs have readied actions. Then he puts it at the bottom of the stack, after Alwyn. Although they're technically no longer acting on the same initiative, Rich decides that, in the next round, the three orcs in melee will simply delay until the other two orcs act, thus putting them back on the same initiative.

Next, Cromagh attacks the ogre, and deals 12 points of damage. Rich records this on the ogre's card, under "Hit Points." Then Kessa acts, casting a spell, and the two orcs use their readied actions to fire arrows at her. Rich moves the orcs' card back up front, on top of Kessa's card. After they're done with their attacks, he moves them back to the back of the stack, facing the right way up again.. This is their new place in the initiative order. Then Kessa resolves her action, and goes to the back of the stack.

Now Alex decides that Tyrian will act, and so Rich moves Tyrian's card back up to the front. He runs to where the two orc archers are standing and uses his unarmed attack to inflict a stunning 14 points of damage! This is 5 more hit points than this particular orc has, so Rich just puts an X through that orc's hit point column on the card.

Then the bear attacks, and absolutely savages Alwyn, dealing 30 points of damage. Alwyn only has 25 hit points, so she's at -5 hit points. Rich turns Alwyn's card 90 degrees to the left, showing the part of the card that reads "Unconscious." Since the bear was the last to act, the next card up is the End of Round card and any end of round effects take place. The only one in effect right now, though, is that Alwyn has to check to see if she stabilizes. Once that's done, Rich moves the End of Round card to the back, and it's time for a new round.

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