D&D Refined

I'm not a big fan of D&D, but I find that if you use some of the best rules from each edition you come up with a much less objectionable game. Here are the D&D rules I suggest. All of these rules can be found in some published edition of D&D rules, or are similar to such.

Character Generation

Race

Race does not limit your choices for attributes, but some attribute choices may be odd and need to be explained (such as a halfling with a +4 Str). It is up to the player to decide if they want to enforce any cultural norms, such as dwarves having mining skills. Only small attempt has been made to balance these options, and if an option seems to be less potent, consider playing the race as a challenge.

Humans

With a generally shorter lifespan than other races, Humans have to learn things faster to survive. Each level, humans gain one more skill point than normal, including at first level.

Elves

Elves have darkvision (see below), and require only an hour of meditation a day instead of sleeping, in order to avoid fatigue. They also have elven grace, which allows the player opt to re-roll one die roll per game day.

Half-elves

Half-elves get one bonus skill point to start, and then another at every odd level. They may also take one of the abilities from the list of elven abilities (darkvision, no sleep, or elven grace).

Dwarves

Dwarves have darkvision (see below), get a natural +1 to toughness, as well as a +1 resolve.

Halflings

Halflings make tough targets due to their size, and so get a natural +1 AC, and +1 on Hide, Move Silently, and Sneak Attack.

Darkvision

This is a god-given magical ability to see in even complete darkness as though it were a cloudy day outside. It is disrupted by any significant light source, such as those needed by humans and halflings to see in dark places.

Attribute Scores

Rate stats by the "mods." Players have 20 points to buy attributes per the cost on the table below.

Mod	Cost
-1 or less	0
0	1
+1	3
+2	6
+3	10
+4	15

Here are some combinations that cost 20 points, if you want to simply pick a set fast:

- +4,0,0,0,0,0
- +4,+1,0,0,-1,-1
- +3,+3,-1,-1,-1,-1
- +3,+2,0,0,0,0
- +3,+2,+1,0,-1,-1
- +3,+1,+1,+1,0,-1
- +2,+2,+2,0,0,-1
- +2,+2,+1,+1,0,0

Classes

A class is merely the set of skills that a chararacter can select from for that level, representing the training presented.

Craft/Profession/Performance skills are always available to all characters, based on background and continued work. Languages are also always available based on background for starting characters, or availability of teachers or texts to train when a character levels up.

Cleric

Training as a cleric allows the following skills to be selected:

- Required: Cast Spells (Divine)
- Optional: Endurance, Knowledge, Perception, Persuade, Weapons (restricted by deity), Willpower

The player must define what god their character worships, and which two domains the god is involved

in: http://www.d20srd.org/srd/spellLists/clericDomains.htm

Nature priests can select the druid spell list as their entire spell list.

The nature of the deity will determine what weapons are trained, if any (those training in the ways of healing gods might choose not to train their followers in weapons at all).

Fighter

Training as a fighter allows the following skills to be selected:

- Required: Weapons
- Optional: Athletics, Endurance, Perception, Persuade, Reflexes, Stealth, Survival

Magic-User

Training as a magic-user allows the following skills to be selected:

- Required: Cast Spells (Arcane)
- Optional: Appraise, Knowledge, Reflexes, Willpower

Magic-Users use spells like 3E sorcerers (i.e. no memorization, and with their number per day).

Rogue

Training as a rogue allows the following skills to be selected:

- Required: Stealth
- Optional: Appraise, Athletics, Mechanical, Perception, Persuade, Reflexes, Survival, Weapons, Willpower

Skills

The following is the list of the division of skills:

- Appraise (Specialize in a type of goods)
- Athletics (Specialize in Balancing, Climbing, Jumping, Riding, Sprinting, Swimming, Tumbling, etc)
- Cast Spells (Specify Arcane, Bardic, Divine, or Druid; Specialize in School or Domain)
- Craft/Perform/Profession (Specify)
- Endurance (Specialize in Armor, Fortitude, Running, Stamina, Toughness)
- Knowledge (Specify Arcana, Healing, History, Nature, Religion, etc. and Specialize within the field)
- Mechanical (Specialize in Disable Device, Engineering, Open Lock)
- Perception (Specialize in Alertness, Detect Motive, Search)
- Persuade (Specialize in Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate)
- Reflexes (Specialize in Dodge, Evade, Initiative)

- Stealth (Specialize in Disguise, Hide, Move Silently, Sneak Attack, Sleight of Hand)
- Language* (Specify, and See Below)
- Survival (Specialize in Biome, including Urban)
- Weapons (Specify by Type, Specialize by weapon)
- Willpower (Specialize in Concentration, Resolve)

If a skill says "Specify" the skill may be bought more than once, and any reasonable number of specific versions of the skill may be taken. The skill may indicate what sort of specific skills may be selected. Some specific skills may have specializations within them, per the rules above, or at GM discretion.

If a skill says "Specialize" then for each level the character takes, they may take another level in a specialization of that skill (this is not automatic, the levels of specialization have to be paid for). These specializations add to the overall skill. So if a character has Common Melee Weapons at 2, they can also take Longsword at 2, for a total of +4 in use of the longsword.

Purchasing Skill Ranks

All skills start at zero, and go up from there based on experience.

At first level characters get 24 points to buy skills. Upon going up a level the character gets 10 more skill points.

A full skill costs 3 skill points to buy one rank, or 9 points to purchase two ranks for that level (no more than two ranks can be purchased per level, even at first level). Specializations can be purchased to a level no higher than the full skill they come from, and cost 1 point each. Thus if a player buys Knowledge - History for their character to level 4, they can purchase a specialization in "Ancient Civilizations" up to level 4, but no more.

Magic

Each level of magic, in addition to being part of the normal contest roll, allows the caster to cast spells as if they were a caster of the level equal to the rank of the skill. This is in terms of how many spells they get each day, and what level the spells are considered to be cast at.

The number of spells a character can cast before refreshing their magic are affected by the character's prime requisite; INT for arcane, WIS for divine (including Druid), CHA for bardic per the table on this page: http://www.d20srd.org/srd/theBasics.htm

The DM and player must work on the effects of spells in general to ensure that they fit the system, but see combat magic below.

Languages

Each character starts with one language for free at the level of basic understanding plus fluency. Breaking into a language gives basic understanding, and costs the usual 3 skill points. Specializations of the language (costing 1 point each) can purchase

- Reading (which includes simple writing)
- Fluent speech
- Once Reading is taken, additional levels can be taken in Writing.
- Language should be noted like so: Elvish, Fluent, Reading, Writing x2

Everybody also starts with the Common Trade Tongue, which is very simple, and cannot be learned to a fluent level, or have higher levels of writing than that which accompanies understanding how to read it.

Stuff

Once we know what a character has for race, attributes and skills, they need to be equipped. Roll 3d6 and multiply by ten for the number of gold pieces a character has to start. Silver are ten to a gold, and copper are ten to a silver.

Below is a link to a page that has notes on combat gear available.

[D&D Refined Equipment](#)

General

General stuff is here: http://www.d20srd.org/srd/equipment/goodsAndServices.htm

Experience

There are several ways a character can acquire experience points (EXP). Note that EXP are not given twice for the same thing, so if your character has a goal of slaying a dragon, they get the EXP for doing that, and not any accomplishment EXP for it. On the other hand, if they were seeking something in the dragon's hoard, and find that, they would get EXP both for slaying the dragon, and finding the object.

Challenges

Experience is awarded for overcoming monsters, per the usual rules (and overcoming means any method of resolving them as a challenge). It is also be awarded by the GM for overcoming other sorts of challenges, such as traps or other dangers. EXP earned from challenges can cause a character to level up on the spot, as the accumulated knowledge they've acquired suddenly takes hold. Challenge EXP are generally awarded for things done on the way to achieving accomplishments.

Accomplishments

Accomplishments, such as clearing a dungeon of evildoers, are rewarded as they give the character a sense of their own self-worth and esteem, and as such cause the character to understand that their abilities may be greater than they had thought (those skills were there the whole time)! The GM must

decide if the accomplishment was Minor, Major, or Grand. This gives the character a proportion of the EXP needed for the next level, as calculated by subtracting the amount that one needs to get to their current level, from the amount needed to get to the next. Thus, the EXP needed for a character currently at second level to get to third is 1500-500 = 1000.

Players are encouraged to decide on goals for their characters that will represent accomplishments with the GM. The size of the reward will be determined by how difficult the goal was to achieve in the end. Accomplishments are generally awarded for getting something done as a result of having overcome multiple challenges.

Minor

Minor accomplishments give the character 1/10th of the EXP needed for the next level, and consist of things like finding somebody or something of importance, safely delivering an object, message or person a short distance through danger, or small personal acccomplishments like finding a steady life partner, or getting a new job.

Major

Major accomplishments give the character 1/5th of the EXP needed for the next level, and consist of things like clearning a small dungeon, safely delivering an object, message or person a considerable distance through various dangers, defending a community from a danger, or big personal accomplishments like getting a position that the character has sought all their lie, or getting married to somebody the character really loves.

Grand

Grand accomplishments give the character half of the EXP needed for the next level, and consist of things like clearing an entire multi-level dungeon, or eliminating a terrible danger that threatens large parts of the world, or being crowned king or high priest of a religion, etc.

Training

1 EXP is earned for each Gold Piece spent on training. Training purchased takes significant time outside of adventuring, though not necessarily an absolutely realistic amount of time. Put simply, one cannot spend gold while on an adventure with no teachers and suddenly level up (as opposed to experienced earned while adventuring, which can level a character up in the field).

Progression

Lvl	EXP
1	0
2	500
3	1500
4	3000

Lvl	EXP
5	5000
6	7500
7	10500
8	14000
9	18000
10	22500

Contests

Whenever you roll, roll a 2d10, add all appropriate modifiers and penalties, and check to see if you equalled or exceeded the GM's set target number (TN). This TN is adjusted by the GM to represent all of the external circumstances surrounding the attempt. So, for example, if a contest is particularly difficult due to bad terrain, this is NOT represented by a penalty to the character's roll, but by a higher TN. Characters will usually get one attribute modifier, and may get one applicable skill modifier if the GM feels that a skill applies. They will also get bonuses based on all pertinent gear they have.

Contest Format

Contests are written to indicate standard things to include in a specific contest in the following generalized form:

Roll + Stat + Skill + Gear

vs.

Base + Stat + Skill + Gear

Note that often gear is omitted in a contest description as there is no standard gear for this contest, but special gear (especially magic items) may give bonuses, and all such bonuses are added to the roll.

Crits and Fumbles

On doubles (the numbers on the dice match) and the number is higher than 5, roll the 2d10 again and add the new result to the current total. Keep doing this as long as you keep rolling doubles higher than 5.

If you roll doubles less than 6, roll again… if the second roll would have been a success, then it's a simple failure. If the second roll fails, a fumble occurs, and something very bad happens (DM Discretion).

Margin of Success

Normal margin of success is 1. For every 5 one exceeds the roll by, add one to the MOS. Often this figure can be taken as a bonus to a subsequent roll, as in rolling over MOS to hit to damage per

combat below.

High Roll - Low Roll	MOS
0-4	1
5-9	2
10-14	3
15-19	4
etc.	etc.

Aiding

Characters may aid each other and themselves in contests. If a character aids, this usually uses up their action for a round. The player selects a target bonus called the Aid Bonus (AB), and enters a contest to see if they get it. The TN for this contest is 4 times targeted AB. So, for example, trying to get an AB of 5 gives a TN of 20.

MOS of the contest adds to the AB, while a fumble means that the target AB is added instead to the opposing TN. Thus a player may play aiding safe, and go for a low AB with a low TN, and just trust to MOS to push it up a bit, or they may go for a larger AB with a high TN, and risk not giving any bonus at all (or even a large bonus to the opposition if they fumble).

Combat

Contest to Hit

Roll + DEX + Weapon Skill + weapon to hit bonus

vs.

10 + AC + DEX + Reflex (Dodge).

Calculate MoS, and transfer to the damage roll below.

Damage Contest

Once the character is hit, the defender rolls to try to defend against taking damage.

Roll + STR + weapon damage bonus

vs.

10 + CON + Toughness + Damage Resistance (DR)

MoS determines the level of the injury below.

Injuries

For each MoS, the player gets an injury to appropriate stats, typically Con, and one other chosen by the DM. These injuries effectively lower the character's stats by the level of the injury, until healed. Injuries are not cumulative, and the player only has to deal with the worst penalty for each stat.

If a character ever takes an injury that lowers their Con to -5 or lower, the character is dying. Contests will happen just for the character to stay alive until stabilized by a healer, and they can do nothing else until so helped.

Contest to Avoid Unconsciousness and Dying

Roll + CON (which will be -5 or less at this point) + Toughness

Vs.

5

The first failure on this roll renders the character unconscious. If the character fails again, they have died.

Ignoring Injury Effects

A player may opt to have his character attempt to ignore the effects of an injury other than CON loss, understanding that this will exacerbate the injury.

Roll + CON + Willpower (Resolve)

vs.

10 + the injury (a -3 penalty becomes a +3 to TN)

MoS is subtracted from the penalties for the injury until morale changes. The injury becomes one worse for all affected attributes.

Healing

Healing spells or potions reduce the effects of any injuries by one per HP healed. Bedrest allows healing contests on a regular basis to reduce injuries point by point.

Using Both Hands

A character can use two one-handed weapons, and get a +1 to hit, and may choose to use the stats of either weapon each turn (not both).

Associated Adventure

For use with the adventure Under Thundermark.

Under Thundermark

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