Three to six players, all alike in cupidity, Down in the dungeon, where we lay our quest, From ancient dragon’s hoard break to immunity, While friendly blood makes for game night unrest.

You asked for it – quite literally! – and literally! Munchkin is the hit card game of backstabbing, looting, and general antisocial behavior. Sounds like Shakespeare to us!

This game includes 168 cards, 12 standies, one gameboard, one custom six-sided die, and these rules. Three to six can play.

**Setup**

Each player takes two standies in the same color and chooses one to place on the space marked “1” on the gameboard. The other standie goes in front of the player as a color reminder.

Divide the cards into the Door deck and the Treasure deck. Shuffle both decks. Deal four cards from each deck to each player. Place the rest of the cards in the appropriate spaces on the gameboard.

**Conflicts Between Cards and Rules**

This rulesheet gives the general rules. Many cards add special rules, so in most cases when the rulesheet disagrees with a card, follow the card. However, ignore any card effect that might seem to contradict one of the rules listed below unless the card explicitly says it supersedes that rule!

1. Nothing can reduce a player below Level 1, although card effects might reduce a player’s or a monster’s combat strength (p. 3) below 1.
2. You go up a level after combat only if you kill a monster.
3. You cannot collect rewards for defeating a monster (e.g., Treasure, levels) in the middle of a combat. You must finish the fight before gaining any rewards.
4. You must kill a monster to reach Level 10.

Any other disputes should be settled by loud arguments, with the owner of the game having the last word. You could also read the Munchkin FAQ and errata pages at munchkin.sjgames.com, or start a discussion at forums.sjgames.com/munchkin... unless it’s more fun to argue.

**Card Management**

Keep separate face-up discard piles for the two decks. You may not look through the discards unless you play a card that allows you to! When a deck runs out, reshaple its discards.

**In Play:** These are the cards on the table in front of you, showing your Race and Class (if any) and the items you are carrying. Continuing Curses and some other cards also stay on the table after you play them. Cards in play are public information and must be visible to the other players.

**Your Hand:** Cards in your hand are not in play. They don’t help you, but they can’t be taken away except by cards that specifically affect “your hand.” At the end of your turn, you may have no more than five cards in your hand (see Charity, p. 2).

Cards in play may not be returned to your hand – they must be discarded or traded if you want to get rid of them.

**Character Creation**

Everyone starts as a Level 1 human with no class. (Heh, heh.) Munchkin characters may be either male or female. Your character’s sex at the start of the game matches the standie on the board. If you change sex, swap standies.

Look at your initial eight cards. If you have any Race or Class cards, you may (if you like) play one of each type by placing it in front of you. If you have any usable items (p. 3), you may play them by placing them in front of you. If you have any doubt about whether you should play a card, you could read below, or you could just charge ahead and do it.

**Starting and Finishing the Game**

Decide who goes first by consulting three witches on a moonless night in Scotland and asking who among you shall be the first to play. Or you could just roll the die.

Play proceeds in turns, each with several phases (see p. 2). When the first player finishes his turn, the player to his left takes a turn, and so on.

The first player to reach Level 10 wins... but you must reach Level 10 by killing a monster, unless a card specifically allows you to win another way.

**Turn Phases**

Your turn begins as soon as the previous player’s turn ends. When your cards are arranged the way you want, go to phase 1.
When You May Take Actions

You may perform these actions at any time:

- Discard a Class or Race.
- Play a Go Up a Level or Hireling.
- Play a Curse.

You may perform these actions at any time, as long as you are not in combat:

- Trade an Item with another player (the other player may not be in combat, either).
- Change which Items you have equipped.
- Play a card that you have just received (some cards may be played even during combat; see above).

You may perform these actions on your own turn:

- Play a new Class or Race card (at any time).
- Sell Items for levels (except when you are in combat).
- Play an Item (most Items cannot be played during combat, but some One-Shot Items can; see p. 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Door</th>
<th>Level Counters: It’s Not Cheating,</th>
<th>Hireling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[1] Kick Open The Door: Draw one card from the Door deck and turn it face up.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it’s a monster, you must fight it. See Combat, p. 3. If the card is a Curse – see Curses, p. 5 – it applies to you immediately (if it can) and is then discarded (unless it has a persistent effect or you keep the card as a reminder of an upcoming effect).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you draw any other card, you may either put it in your hand or play it immediately.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| [2] Look For Trouble/Loot The Room: If you fought a monster in phase 1, skip this phase and go to phase 3. |
| If you did NOT draw a monster when you first opened the door, you have two choices: either Look For Trouble or Loot The Room. |
| Look For Trouble: Play a monster from your hand and fight it, just as though you had found it when you kicked open the door. Don’t play a monster you can’t handle, unless you’re sure you can count on getting help (see p. 4)! |
| Loot The Room: Draw a second card from the Door deck, face down, and place it in your hand. |

| [3] Charity: If you have more than five cards in your hand, you must play enough cards to get you to five or below. If you cannot, or do not want to, you must give the excess cards to the player with the lowest Level. If other players are tied for lowest, divide the cards as evenly as possible, but it’s up to you who gets the bigger set(s) of leftovers. If YOU are the lowest or tied for lowest, just discard the excess. |

As soon as you are finished with Charity, the next player’s turn begins.

Character Stats

Each character is basically a collection of weapons, armor, and magic items, with three stats: Level, Race, and Class. For instance, you might describe your character as “a Level 8 Elf Bard with the Ruffled Coif, Monolog, and Armor of Proof.”

Combat: Basic Rules

When you fight a monster, you compare your combat strength (your Level plus any bonuses or penalties) against the monster’s combat strength. If your combat strength is greater, you win! If it is tied or lower, the monster wins.

For the full explanation, see Combat, p. 3.

Level: This is a measure of how generally buff and study you are. When the rules or cards refer to your Level, capitalized, they mean the number in the space where your standie is.

You gain a level when you kill a monster, or when a card says that you do. You can also sell Items to buy levels (see Items, p. 3).

You lose a level when a card says you do. Your Level can never go below 1. However, your combat strength can be negative, if you get hit by a Curse or suffer some other kind of penalty.

Class: Characters may be Bards (of course!), Warriors, Wizards, Thieves, or Clerics. If you have no Class card in front of you, you have no class.

Each Class has special abilities, shown on the cards. You gain the abilities of a Class the moment you play its card in front of you, and lose them as soon as you discard that card. Some Class abilities are powered by discsards. You may discard any card, in play or in your hand, to power a special ability.

See the Class cards for when abilities can be used. Note that a Thief cannot steal while he or the target is fighting – and as soon as a monster is revealed, the fight is on!

You can discard a Class card at any time, even in combat: “I don’t wanna be a Wizard anymore.” When you discard a Class card, you become classless until you play another Class card.

You may not belong to more than one class at once unless you play the Super Munchkin card.

Race: Characters may be Humans, Elves, Dwarves, or Halflings. If you have no Race card in front of you, you are human.

Humans have no special abilities. The rules for Classes, above, also apply to Races.

You may not belong to more than one race at once unless you play the Half-Breed card.

Super Munchkin and Half-Breed

These cards may be played whenever it is legal to play a Class or Race, as long as you have an appropriate card (Class for Super Munchkin, Race for Half-Breed) to attach it to. You cannot have more than one of the same Class or Race card in play at once.

If you play Super Munchkin with a single Class, you get all the advantages of being that Class (the ability to equip Class-only Items, and monsters with penalties against that Class suffer those penalties) but none of the disadvantages (you may equip Items forbidden to that Class, and monsters do not get bonuses because of your Class). If the Class has an ability that has a cost, however, you must still pay it – you aren’t that Super!
If you play Super Munchkin while you have two Classes, you have all the normal advantages and disadvantages of both Classes.

All of the above is also true for Half-Breed, just for Races.

TREASURES

Treasure cards include permanent and One-Shot cards. Any Treasure card may be played to the table as soon as you get it, or at any time on your own turn except during combat (unless the rules below or the card itself says otherwise).

ITEMS

Most Treasures are Items. Items have a Gold Piece value. ("No Value" is equivalent to zero Gold Pieces, and a "No Value" card is considered an Item.)

All Items you have in play are considered "carried." Items that are actually giving you a bonus are "equipped." You should indicate Items that are not equipped by turning the cards sideways. You may not alter the status of your Items during a combat or while running away.

Anyone can carry any Item (except for extra Big items; see below), but you may equip only one Headgear, one suit of Armor, one pair of Footgear, and two "1 Hand" Items (or one "2 Hands" Item) . . . unless you have a card that lets you ignore these limits, such as Hireling or Cheat!, or unless one of the cards says otherwise. If you are carrying two Headgear cards, for instance, you can equip only one of them at a time.

You cannot discard Item cards "just because." You may sell Items for a level, trade Items with other players, or give an Item to another player who wants it (see below). You may discard Items to power certain Class and Race abilities. And a Curse or a monster's Bad Stuff (see p. 5) may force you to get rid of something!

Big Items: You may carry any number of Small items, but only one Big one. (Any item not marked Big is considered Small.) You may not discard one Big item to play another; you must sell the first Item, trade it, lose it to a Curse or Bad Stuff, or discard it to power a Class or Race ability.

If something lets you have more than one Big item (for instance, the Dwarf race) and you lose that Item or ability, you must either correct the problem immediately or get rid of all but one Big item. If it's your turn and you're not in combat, you can sell the excess Big items (as long as you have at least 1,000 Gold Pieces of Items to sell). Otherwise, you must give them to the lowest-Level player(s) who can carry them! If any Big items are still left over, discard them.

Trading: You may trade Items (but no other cards) with other players. You may only trade Items from the table — not from your hand. You may trade at any time except when you or your trading partner are in combat — in fact, the best time to trade is when it's not your turn. Any Item you receive in a trade must remain in play.

You may also give Items away without a trade, to bribe other players — “I'll give you my Iambic Thermometer if you won't help Bob fight Lady Macbeth!”

You may show your hand to others. Like we could stop you.

Selling Items for Levels: At any point during your turn except during combat or Running Away, you may discard Items worth a total of at least 1,000 Gold Pieces and immediately go up one level. ("No Value" cards are the same as zero Gold Pieces.) If you discard (for instance) 1,100 Gold Pieces worth, you don't get change. But if you can manage 2,000 worth, you can go up two levels at once, and so on. You may sell Items from your hand as well as those you are carrying.

You may not sell Items to go to Level 10.

"ONE-SHOT" TREASURES

Treasures labeled One-Shot may be used once, either from your hand or the table (if they are Items) and then must be discarded. Most of these are used during combat to strengthen the munchkins or the monsters. Some have other effects, however, so read the card carefully! Discard these cards as soon as the combat is over or their effect is resolved.

One-Shots with a Gold Piece value may be sold for levels, just like other Items.

OTHER TREASURES

Other Treasure cards (like Go Up a Level cards) are not Items. Most of these cards say when they can be played, and whether they stay in play or are discarded. A couple of specific examples:

Go Up a Level cards may be played on yourself or any other player at any time, even during combat. Discard them once they are played. Exception: You cannot play a Go Up a Level card to give a player the winning level!

Hireling may be played at any time, on any turn. You cannot give a Hireling an Item to carry while you are in combat, however.

COMBAT

To fight a monster, compare its combat strength to yours. Combat strength is the total of Level plus all modifiers — positive or negative — given by Items and other cards. If the monster’s combat strength is equal to yours, or greater, you lose the combat and must Run Away (see p. 5). If your combat strength totals more than the monster’s — note that monsters win ties! — you kill it and go up a level (two levels for some big monsters). You'll also get the number of Treasures shown on its card.

Sometimes a card will let you get rid of the monster without killing it. This is still “winning,” but you don’t get a level. Unless the card says otherwise, you don’t get the Treasures, either.
It is then discarded (unless it has a persistent effect or you keep the card face up.

You who gets the bigger set(s) of leftovers. If you are the lowest or tied for enough cards to get you to five or below. If you cannot, or do not want to, you may perform these actions on your own turn:

- Sell Items for levels (except when you are in combat).
- Go Up a Level.
- Look For Trouble.
- Draw one card from the Door deck and turn it face up.

Armor of Proof (see p. 4)!

If you did NOT draw a monster when you first opened the door, you have the rules or cards refer to your Level, capitalized, they mean the number in the

If you get a monster card any other way, it goes into your hand and may be played during your own turn to Look For Trouble, or played with the Wandering Monster card to join another player’s fight. (See Fighting Multiple Monsters, below.) Each monster card is a single monster, even if the name on the card is plural.

MONSTER ENHANCERS

Certain cards, called monster enhancers, raise or lower the combat strength of individual monsters. (Penalties to monsters are still considered enhancers.) They also affect the number of Treasures the monsters are worth. Monster enhancers may be played by any player during any combat.

All enhancers on a single monster add together. If there are multiple monsters in a combat, the person who plays each Enhancer must choose which monster it applies to.

Fighting Multiple Monsters

Some cards (notably Wandering Monster) allow your rivals to send other monsters to join the fight. You must defeat their combined combat strengths. Any special abilities, such as forcing you to fight with your Level only, apply to the entire fight. If you have the right cards, you can eliminate one monster from the combat and fight the other(s) normally, but you cannot choose to fight one and Run Away from the other(s). If you eliminate one monster, but then run from the other(s), you don’t get any levels or Treasure!

Undead Monsters

Several monsters in this set are tagged Undead. You may play any Undead monster from your hand into combat to help any other Undead, without using a Wandering Monster card. If you have a card that can be used to make a monster Undead, you may play it with a non-Undead monster to use this rule.

Asking For Help

If you cannot win a combat on your own, you may ask any other player to help you. If he refuses, you may ask another player, and so on, until they all turn you down or someone helps. Only one player can help you, adding his combat strength to yours. Anyone can play cards to affect your combat, however!

You’ll probably have to bribe someone to help. You may offer your helper any Item(s) you are currently carrying, or any number of the Treasure cards the monster has. If you offer him part of the monster’s Treasure, you must agree whether he picks first, or you pick first, or whatever. You may also offer to play any cards from your hand that you legally could, such as Go Up a Level cards, on your helper.

The special abilities or vulnerabilities of the monster also apply to your helper, and vice versa. For instance, if a Warrior helps you, you will win if your combined total ties that of the monster, and he can Berserk and discard cards to add to his combat strength (but only once per combat, not once per monster). If you are facing Hamlet and a Cleric helps you, the monster’s combat strength is reduced by 3 unless you are also a Cleric. But if you are facing Two Bees and a Bard helps you, the monster’s combat strength is increased by 4 (unless you, too, are a Bard and the monster’s combat strength has already been increased).

If someone successfully helps you kill the monster, discard it, draw Treasures (see Rewards, below), and follow any special instructions on the monster card. You level up for each slain monster. Your helper does not go up any levels . . . unless he’s an Elf, in which case he gains one level for each monster slain. You draw the Treasure cards, even if it was your helper’s special ability that defeated the monster, and distribute them according to the agreement you reached.

Interfering With Combat

You can interfere with others’ combats in several ways, including:

Use a one-shot card. You could help another player by using a one-shot to strengthen his side. Of course, you can “accidentally” strengthen the monster with it, instead . . .

Play a monster enhancer. These cards (usually) make a monster stronger . . . and give it more Treasure. You can play these either during your own combats or during someone else’s combat.

Add a monster from your hand to join the combat, either with a Wandering Monster card or by using the special Undead rule.

Backstab a player in combat, if you’re a Thief.
Curse them, if you have a Curse card.

Rewards

When you kill a monster, you get one level per monster, unless the Monster card says something else . . . and you get its Treasure! Each monster has a Treasure number on the bottom of its card. Draw that many Treasures, modified by any Monster Enhancers played on it. Draw face-down if you killed the monster alone. Draw face-up, so the whole party can see what you got, if someone helped you.

If you defeat a monster by nonlethal means, you do not get a level and you may or may not get the Treasure, depending on the method.

Treasure cards can be played as soon as you get them, even if you are the helper.
Example of Combat, With Numbers and Everything

James is a Level 6 Warrior with the Footlights (which gives him a +2 to his combat strength). He kicks open the door and finds the Not Two Bees, a Level 10 monster. James is at a 8 and the Not Two Bees is at a 10, so James is losing.

James: O evil Fate! I’m forced to play this card.
He plays the Toe of Frog, giving him +2 for this fight. Now his combat strength is 10, tied with the Not Two Bees’ 10. As a Warrior, James wins ties.

James: Let Toe of Frog bring victory hard-won.
Marieke: Lest Not Two Bees fall down to earth, unmourned, we play Two Bees to join this epic clash.

Marieke plays Two Bees, which may be played as a +10 bonus to Not Two Bees. Now James is losing, 20 to 10.

James: Be thou accurs’d, vile mistress of the hives!
Matthew: My lord, it seems you need a friend this day. (Matthew is playing a Level 4 Elf with the Arrows and Slings. Individually, each would give him a +2 bonus, but they combine for a total +6, so his combat strength is 10. With James’ 10, that’s a total of 20 – another tie! – but James still wins ties, so that’s fine.)

James: You’ll get a level when we best this foe!
Matthew: Indeed, ’tis so. But still, I want some loot.
James: You’ll get but one, and one of mine own choice.
Matthew: A fairer pact no Elf has ever seen!
Marieke: OK, fine, whatever. I’m tired of iambic pentameter. You win.

No one else says anything, so James goes up one level and claims the Not Two Bee’s three Treasures, giving one to Matthew. And the game goes on . . .

Running Away

If nobody will help you . . . or if somebody tries to help, and your fellow party members interfere so the two of you still cannot win . . . you must Run Away. You don’t get any levels or Treasure. You don’t even get to Loot The Room. And you don’t always escape unharmed . . .

Roll the die. You escape on a 5 or more. Some Class and Race abilities and some Treasures might make it easier or harder to Run Away from all monsters. And some monsters give you a bonus or penalty to your roll for that monster only.

If you fail to Run Away from a monster, it does Bad Stuff to you, as described on its card. This may vary from losing an Item, to losing one or more levels, to Death (see below).

If you are fleeing from multiple monsters, you roll separately to escape each one, in any order you choose, and suffer Bad Stuff from each one that catches you as soon as it catches you.

If two players are cooperating and still can’t defeat the monster(s), they must both Run Away. They roll separately, and each player chooses in what order to Run Away. The monster(s) CAN catch them both.

Once you have resolved all Run Away rolls, discard the monster(s).

Death

If you die, you lose all your stuff. You keep your Class(es), Race(s), and Level (and any Curses that were affecting you when you died) – your new character will look just like your old one. If you have Half-Breed or Super Munchkin, keep those as well.

Once you have died, you don’t have to Run Away from any remaining monsters.

Looting The Body: Lay out your hand beside the cards you had in play (making sure not to include the cards mentioned above). If you have an Item carried by a Hireling or attached to a Cheat card, separate those cards. Starting with the player with the highest Level, everyone else chooses one card . . . in case of ties in Level, roll a die. Once everyone gets one card, discard the rest. If your corpse runs out of cards, tough. Looted cards go into players’ hands.

Dead characters cannot receive cards for any reason, not even Charity, and cannot level up or win the game.

When the next player begins his turn, your new character appears and can help others in combat with his Level and Class or Race abilities . . . but you have no cards, unless you receive Charity or gifts from other players.

On your next turn, start by drawing four face-down cards from each deck and playing any legal cards you want to, just as when you started the game. Then take your turn normally.

Curses

If drawn face-up during the Kick Open The Door phase, Curse cards apply to the person who drew them.

If acquired some other way, such as by Looting The Room, Curse cards go into your hand and may be played on any player at any time. ANY time, do you hear me? Reducing someone’s abilities just as he thinks he has killed a monster is a lot of fun.

Usually, a Curse affects its victim immediately (if it can) and is then discarded. However, some Curses give a penalty later in the game or have a continuing effect. Keep these cards until you get rid of the Curse or the penalty takes effect. (Curse cards you keep as a reminder may not be discarded to power Class or Race abilities. Nice try!)

Note: If someone plays a “your next combat” Curse on you while you are in combat, it counts in that combat! The same is true for a “your next turn” Curse played during your turn.

If a Curse can apply to more than one Item, the victim decides which Item is lost or Cursed.

If a Curse applies to something you don’t have, ignore it. For instance, if you draw Head of an Ass and you have no Headgear, nothing happens; discard the card. (Some Curses have alternate effects, though, so read the card!)

There will be times when it will help you to play a Curse or Monster on yourself, or to “help” another player in a way that costs him Treasure. This is very munchkinly. Do it.
Running Away

In order to Run Away, the monster(s) can catch them both. The monster(s) can catch you as soon as it catches you. Each one, in any order you choose, and suffer Bad Stuff from each one that unharmed... you must Run Away. You don’t get the Not Two Bee’s three Treasures, giving one to Matthew. And finds the Not Two Bees, a Level 10 monster. James is at a 8 and would give him a +2 bonus, but they combine for a total +6, so his... is not enough for some people. To satisfy their insatiable longings, we’ve created Epic Munchkin, a new set of rules that gives all your Munchkin sets that high-octane boost you need to make it up to Level 20! Look for it at munchkin.sjgames.com/epic – it’s completely, absolutely FREE!

All of the above!!!

Faster Play Rules

For a faster game, you can add a “phase 0” called Listen At The Door. At the start of your turn before doing anything else, draw a face-down Door card, which you may play or not. Then arrange cards and Kick Open The Door normally. If you Loot The Room, draw a face-down Treasure, not a Door.

You can also allow shared victories – if a player reaches Level 10 in a fight where he had a helper, the helper also wins the game, no matter what level he is.

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Many of the cards in this set were originally suggested by the Sea Monkeys on the JoCo Cruise 2015. Thanks to the following folks for their wonderful, terrible ideas:

Dan Carey: Yellow Cross Garters  •  Gary Evans: Banquo, Curse! Forget Your Lines, Pound of Flesh  •  Michael Galvin: Black Friar, Globe
Sami Genstein: Curse! Head of an Ass  •  Art Hart: Guildenstern, Rosencrantz  •  Vern Hart: Mortal Coil  •  Rob Hick: Yorick
Mindy Klenoff: Titus Androgynous  •  Amy Osborne: Curse! Murder Most Foul, Tuts, Solid Flesh  •  Danny Peacock: Brutus  •  Maggie Peacock: Toga
Danial Porter: Not Two Bees, Two Bees  •  Matthew Schaepkerkotter: Curse! Bite Your Thumb, Eater of Broken Meat, King Lear
Laura Sullivan: I Take Thy Heart  •  Maricke Talens: Curse! Break a Leg, Out, Damned Spot, Tame the Shrew
James Terwilliger: Arrows, Curse! Winter of Your Discontent, Much Ado About Nothing, O Happy Dagger, Outrageous Fortune, Scary Wives of Windsor, Shakespearean Canon, Slings
Marcella Wigeh: First Folio, Get Thee to a Nunnery  •  Brian Wilson: Pantaloons, Witches Three  •  David Wilson: Eye of Newt

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