Roleplaying games seem to create new editions every other week. (Except for GURPS, which is in the 16th year of the Fourth Edition and still going strong. gurps.sjgames.com. End of advert.) Munchkin has had only one major revision since it was launched in 2001, and we don’t see the need for a new edition now . . . but that doesn’t mean we can’t have fun with the idea and poke a little fun at our friends in the RPG industry along the way.

This game includes 168 cards, a custom six-sided die, and these rules. Three to six can play. You will need 10 tokens (coins, poker chips, whatever – or any gadget that counts to 10) for each player.

SETUP

Divide the cards into the Door deck and the Treasure deck. Shuffle both decks. Deal four cards from each deck to each player.

CARD MANAGEMENT

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

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, and you cannot force another player to help you do it.

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.game, or start a discussion at forums.sjgames.com/munchkin . . . unless it’s more fun to argue.

STARTING AND FINISHING THE GAME

The player who most resembles their current RPG character goes first. Or you could just roll the die.

Play proceeds in turns, each with several phases (see p. 2). When the first player finishes a turn, the player to the 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.

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. (Editions come and editions go, but bad jokes are forever.) 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.

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.

(1) Kick Down The Door: Draw one card from the Door deck and turn it face up.

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).

If you draw any other card, you may either put it in your hand or play it immediately.
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.
- 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).
- Play an Item (most Items cannot be played during combat, but some one-shot Items can; see p. 3).

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).
- You are in combat – in fact, the best time to trade is when it's not your

You may perform these actions at any time, as long as you are not in combat:
- 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 if 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 – for instance, you can play Curses, sell Items from your hand, or play Items to the table. If you cannot reduce your hand to five cards, or do not want to, you must give the excess cards to the player with the lowest Level. If 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 Dwarf Cleric with Plot Armor, a Hammer of Finger Nailing, and the Turning Keys.”

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 this number.

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.

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.

Class: Characters may be Warriors, Wizards, Thieves, or Clerics. 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 discs. 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, Halflings, or Orcs. 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 to it. 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

Treasures 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 that items 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 "I Hand" Items (or one "2 Hands" item) . . . unless you have a card that lets you ignore these limits, such as Hircing or Cheatif, 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.

Likewise, some Items have restrictions: for instance, the Meat Shield can only be wielded by a Halfling. Its bonus only counts for someone who is, at the moment, a Halfling.

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 can 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 Wombat Boots if you won’t help Bob fight the Eavesdropper!”

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

One-Shot Treasures say “Usable once only” and are marked at the bottom of the card. Most of these are used during combat to strengthen the munchkins or the monsters, and may be played from your hand or from the table. 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!

Hirling may be played at any time, on any turn. You cannot give a Hirling 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. If the last monster is removed from a combat, the fight ends immediately.

Some monster cards have special powers that affect combat – a bonus against a particular Race or Class, for instance. Be sure to check these!

You and the other players may play one-shot Treasures or use Class or Race abilities to help or harm you in your combat. Some Door cards may also be played into a combat, such as monster enhancers (see below).

Remember: while you are in combat, you cannot sell, equip, unequip, or trade Items, or play Treasures from your hand, unless these rules or the card says otherwise.

If you kill a monster (or monsters!), discard the monster(s) and any other cards played, and claim your rewards. But note: someone may play a hostile card on you, or use a special power, just as you think you have won. When
you kill a monster, you must wait a reasonable time, defined as the amount of

time it takes a munchkin to find something in the rulebook to prove that

the GM was wrong, for anyone else to speak up. After that, you have really
drawn the monster, and you really get the level(s) and Treasures, though they
can still whine and argue.

MONSTERS

If drawn face-up, during the Kick Down The Door phase, monsters

immediately attack the person who drew them.

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.

Exception: Anything that enhances a monster also enhances its Life

Partner . . . if Greater, Advantaged, and Life Partner are played on a

single monster, in any order, you are facing a Greater Advantaged monster

and its Greater Advantaged Life Partner. Good luck . . .

Fighting Multiple Monsters

Some cards (such as 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 their combat strength to yours.

Anyone can play cards to affect your combat, however!

You will 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 part of the monster’s Treasure, you must agree

whether they pick 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 the Warrior can Berserk and

discard cards to add to their combat strength (but only once per combat, not

once per monster). But if you are facing the Bearbug and an Orc helps you,

the monster’s combat strength is increased by 4 (unless you, too, are an Orc

and the monster’s combat strength has already been increased).

Interfering With Combat

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

Use a One-Shot. You could help another player by using a One-

Shot to strengthen their 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.

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 the helper is an Elf, in which case they gain 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.

A few cards or abilities allow you to compel another player to help you in

combat. These abilities do not work if you are fighting for the win — and if

you force someone to help you and then the fight becomes one for the win,
your helper gets to back out without penalty. However, if you voluntarily

help someone, you don’t get to back out just because they’re about to win the

game — so pay attention!
Example of Combat, With Numbers and Everything

Kim is a Level 4 Cleric with the Pickle Spear (which gives him a +4 to his combat strength). He kicks open the door and finds the Glampire, a Level 14 Undead monster. Kim’s at an 8, the Glampire is at a 14, so Kim is losing.

Kim: I hate to turn it away . . . No, I don’t!

He discards three cards, using his Cleric ability to give him +9 for this fight. Now his combat strength is 17, beating the Glampire’s 14.

Roger: Too bad it has the advantage!

Roger plays Advantaged and gets a lucky roll, adding 6 to the Glampire’s combat strength. Now Kim is losing, 20 to 17.

Kim: I’ll remember that.

Roger: Want some help? (Roger is playing a Level 2 Elf with the Reforged Sword, so his combat strength is 4. Combined with Kim’s 17, they would have 21, just barely enough to defeat the Glampire’s 20.)

Kim: And give you a level? Not a chance! Look at my fabulous glitter!

Kim plays Prismatic Glitter, giving himself a +5 and a total combat strength of 22.

Roger: That is fabulous, I have to admit.

Kim: That’s +5 to me, and now I’m winning, 22 to 20 . . . so I’m killing the Glampire unless someone else plans to mess with me.

Anyone?

No one says anything, so Kim goes up a level and claims the Glampire’s treasures — four from the Glampire card, and one extra because it was Advantaged. And the game goes on . . .

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.

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 their turn, your new character appears and can help others in combat with your 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 Down 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.
More Munchkin!

Visit munchkin.game for news, errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. To discuss Munchkin with our staff and your fellow munchkins, visit our forums at forums.sjgames.com/munchkin. Check out munchkin.game/gameplay/resources/ for reference cards, playmats, and dozens of links.

Use the #PlayMunchkin hashtag on social media to get our attention!

Twitter. Our Twitter feed often has Munchkin news (or bonus rules!): twitter.com/SJGames.

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The URL for this set is munchkin.game/products/games/munchkins-and-mazes/.

The icon for this set is

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 Lose Your Armor and you have no Armor, 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 them Treasure. This is very munchkiny. Do it.

Super-Sized Munchkin

Studies have shown that 8.4 out of 9.7 Munchkin players just can’t get enough of the game. Here are some ideas to take your Munchkin games to new heights – or lows:

Combining different Munchkin sets. You can mix two (or more) base sets and expansions together for a genre-crossing mega-Munchkin adventure! Space plus Old West? Steampunk vampires? No problem!

Expansions. These add still more monsters to kill, new Treasure to loot, and sometimes entirely new kinds of cards. Ask for all the Munchkin sets and expansions at your local game or comic store – find it using our Store Finder, storefinder.sjgames.com – but if you don’t have a local store, we’ll be happy to sell them directly to you at warehouse23.com.

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 you are the helper, you also win the game, no matter what Level you are.

Development by Andrew Hackard • Illustrated by Lar deSouza

Based on Steve Jackson’s Munchkin • Card Backs Illustrated by John Kovalic

President/Editor-in-Chief: Steve Jackson • Chief Executive Officer: Philip Reed • Chief Operating Officer: Susan Bueno • Chief Creative Officer: Sam Mitschke

Munchkin Line Editor: Andrew Hackard • Production Manager: Sabrina Gonzalez • Production Artist: Alex Fernandez

Art Director: Shelli Galey • Project Manager: Darryll Silva • Operations Manager: Randy Scheunemann • Director of Sales: Ross Jepson

Playtesters: Ryan J. Nims

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