

Thief

You are a hulking, skulking thug waiting for your next victim, a dexterous wall-climber cozening treasures from ostensibly impenetrable vaults, a fleet-footed outpurse outrunning shouting pursuers through a crowded market, or a brooding killer stalking a difficult target.

Thieves can be big or small, fast or slow, tall or thin, but they all have one thing in common: they survive not by sword or spell, but by stealth and cunning.

Hit points: A thief gains 1d6 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: A thief is trained in these weapons: blackjack, blowgun, crossbow, dagger, dart, garrote, longsword, short sword, sling, and staff. Thieves are careful in their choice of armor, as it affects the use of their skills.

Alignment: Although thieves have little regard for the laws of civilization, they are not necessarily chaotic.

Lawful thieves are ubiquitous, and they belong to institutions of organized crime: guilds of beggars who feign illness to fleece the generous, pirate gangs that hijack innocent travelers, or organized brigands who charge “protection fees” for certain routes. They are fences who dispose of stolen goods, enforcers who maintain the pecking order of the underworld, and petty burglars who work their way up to become mob bosses.

Chaotic thieves operate as independent agents. They are assassins and con artists, swindlers and sociopaths, or outright murderers and killers. They acknowledge no master aside from the glint of gold.

Neutral thieves are double agents: the kindly housekeeper who filches valuable baubles while the master sleeps, the “inside man” who leaves the vault unlocked one night, or the urban spy who sells blackmail secrets to his court’s enemies.

Thieves’ Cant: Thieves speak a secret language called the cant known only to members of their class. This is a spoken language with no written alphabet. Teaching the cant to a non-thief is punished by death. Certain double-entendre phrases in Common have an alternate meaning in the cant and are used by thieves to identify their brethren covertly.

Thieving skills: A thief learns certain skills that aid his illicit pursuits. A thief can pick locks, find and disable traps, creep silently, hide in shadows, climb sheer surfaces, forge documents, pick pockets, handle poison, and read languages.

The thief’s alignment determines his interests, and those interests determine his rate of advancement in the various thieving skills. The thief receives a bonus to his skills based on level and alignment, as shown on table X-X.

To use a thief skill, the player rolls d20 and adds his modifier. He must beat a DC assigned to the task at hand. An easy task is DC 5, while an extremely difficult task is DC 20 – for example, picking an extraordinarily well crafted lock, or picking the pocket of an alert guard. In some cases, the judge may make the roll for the character, where the result will not be known until some trigger (e.g., a forged document may not be truly tested until presented to the king’s commissary).

A thief needs tools to pick locks, find and disable traps, climb sheer surfaces, forge documents, and handle poisons. A 1st-level thief must purchase a set of thieves' tools that allows him to use these skills.

Success when using a thief's skill means the following:

Backstab: The most successful thieves kill without their victims ever being aware of the threat. When attacking a target from behind or when the target is otherwise unaware, the thief receives the indicated attack bonus to his attack roll. In addition, if he hits, the thief automatically achieves a critical hit, rolling on the crit table as per his level (see page XX). Typically, backstabs are combined with checks to sneak silently or hide in shadows, such that a thief attacks with surprise and is able to backstab. Certain weapons are particularly effective with backstab attempts and do additional damage, as noted in the equipment list. Backstab attempts can only be made against creatures with anatomy with clear vulnerabilities.

Sneak silently: A thief never makes an opposed check to move silently; that is, the check is never made against the target's attempt to listen. The thief rolls against a hard DC, as noted below, and success indicates that the thief did indeed sneak completely silently – except for demi-gods and extraordinary magic, the thief's movement cannot be heard. This skill is often used to sneak up on unsuspecting guards and make a backstab attempt. The base DC for moving across stone surfaces is DC 10. Cushioned surfaces, such as grass or carpet, are DC 5; moderately noisy surfaces, such as creaking wooden boards, are DC 15; and extremely noisy surfaces, like crackling leaves, still water, or crunchy gravel, are DC 20.

Hide in shadows: A successful hide in shadows check means the thief cannot be seen. As with sneaking silently, this check is never opposed, and is often used previous to a backstab attempt. The thief can attempt to hide in broad daylight should he be so bold! The base DC for sneaking down a hallway with moderate cover (chairs, bookcases, crevices, nooks and crannies, alcoves, etc.) is DC 10. Hiding at night or in a shaded or low-light area is easier, at DC 5; hiding under a full moon is DC 10; hiding in daylight but in a dark shadow or behind a solid object is DC 15; and hiding in broad daylight with minimal obstruction is DC 20.

Pick pocket: The thief takes an object from a target's pockets. This skill also other feats of legerdemain, such as card tricks, minor magic tricks, and so on. An unaware target with a loose pocket and unsecured coin pouch can be picked at DC 5; DC 20 is the requirement for picking a target who is actively watching and monitoring their belongings; and the varying degrees of watchfulness in between define other check thresholds.

Climb sheer surfaces: As one would expect. DC 20 is a perfectly smooth surface with no visible handholds. A normal stone wall is DC 10.

Pick lock: A mundane lock is DC 10. An extremely well crafted lock is DC 20. Some locks of legendary manufacture and notable difficult are DC 25 or even higher.

Find trap and disable trap: A large, bulky trap is DC 10. This would include traps like a pit in the floor, a spring-loaded axe, or a dropped portcullis. More subtle traps are DC 15, 20, or even higher. A natural 1 on these checks triggers the trap.

Forge document: The DC varies with the complexity and originality of the source document, ranging from DC 5 to DC 20.

Disguise self: The degree of change determines the DC. The thief can transform himself to resemble someone of the same basic race and physical dimensions with a DC 5 check. Changing significant facial features requires a DC 10 check. Changing physical traits, like mannerisms and height, requires a DC 15 check. Fooling someone close to the target (such as a parent or spouse) requires a minimum DC 20 check.

Read languages: Interpreting simple meaning requires a DC 15 check. Interpreting anything more detailed is DC 20.

Handle poison: Any time a thief uses poison, he must make a DC 10 safety check. On failure, he accidentally poisons himself! This check is made each time poison is applied to a blade or other surface. Additionally, on a natural 1 on any attack roll with a poisoned blade, the thief automatically poisons himself, in addition to any other results.

Cast spell from scroll: Provided a spell is written on a scroll, a thief can attempt to read the scroll and cast the magical spell. The spell check DC is as standard, but the thief rolls the indicated type of die to attempt to beat that DC. The thief does *not* apply Intelligence or Personality modifiers to his roll, nor may he attempt spellburn.

Luck and Wits: Thieves survive on their luck and their wits, and the most successful thieves live a life of fortune on guts and intuition. A thief gains additional bonuses when making a Luck check, as follows.

First, the thief rolls a luck die when he expends Luck. The luck die is indicated on Table X-X: Thief. For each point of Luck expended, he rolls one die, and applies that modifier to his roll. For example, a level 2 thief who burns 2 points of Luck adds +2d4 to a d20 roll.

Second, unlike other classes, the thief recovers lost Luck, to a limited extent. The thief's Luck score is restored each night by a number of points equal to his level. This process cannot take his Luck score past its natural maximum. For example, a level 1 thief attempts to disable a trap, and fails by 2 on his check. He has a Luck of 11. He burns 2 points of Luck to add 2d3 to his result, allowing him to succeed. His Luck is now 9. Because he is level 1, his Luck score will be restored by 1 point on the following morning, bringing it back up to 10. Then 1 additional point will be restored on the morning following that, bringing it to 11. It will not increase past that point.

Action dice: A thief uses his action dice for any normal activity, including attacks and skill checks.

Table X-X: Thief

Level	Attack	Crit Die/Table	Action Dice	Luck Die	Ref	Fort	Will
1	+0	1d10/II	1d20	d3	+1	+1	+0
2	+1	1d12/II	1d20	d4	+1	+1	+0
3	+1	1d14/II	1d20	d5	+2	+1	+1

4	+2	1d16/II	1d20	d6	+2	+2	+1
5	+2	1d20/II	1d20	d7	+3	+2	+1

Table X-X: Thief Titles

Level	Title by Alignment		
	Lawful	Chaotic	Neutral
1	Bravo	Thug	Beggar
2	Apprentice	Murderer	Cutpurse
3	Rogue	Cutthroat	Burglar
4	Capo	Assassin	Robber
5	Boss	Executioner	Master thief

Table X-X: Thief Skills by Level and Alignment

Skill	Bonus for Lawful Thieves (Path of the Thug)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Backstab	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Sneak silently*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Hide in shadows*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Pick pocket*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Climb sheer surfaces*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Pick lock*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Find trap†	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Disable trap*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Forge document*	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
Disguise self‡	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9
Read languages†	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
Handle poison	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9
Cast spell from scroll	d10	d10	d12	d12	d14	d14	d16	d16	d20	d20

Skill	Bonus for Chaotic Thieves (Path of the Assassin)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Backstab	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Sneak silently*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Hide in shadows*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Pick pocket*	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9

Climb sheer surfaces*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Pick lock*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Find trap†	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Disable trap*	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9
Forge document*	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
Disguise self‡	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Read languages†	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
Handle poison	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Cast spell from scroll	d10	d10	d12	d12	d14	d14	d16	d16	d20	d20

Skill

Bonus for Neutral Thieves (Path of the Swindler)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Backstab	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9
Sneak silently*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Hide in shadows*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Pick pocket*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Climb sheer surfaces*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Pick lock*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Find trap†	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Disable trap*	+1	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13
Forge document*	+3	+5	+7	+8	+9	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15
Disguise self‡	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
Read languages†	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9
Handle poison	+0	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
Cast spell from scroll	d12	d12	d14	d14	d16	d16	d20	d20	d20	d20

* The thief's Agility modifier, if any, also modifies checks for these skills.

† The thief's Intelligence modifier, if any, also modifies checks for these skills.

‡ The thief's Personality modifier, if any, also modifies checks for these skills.

Table X-X: Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Range	Cost in gp
Battleaxe*	1d8	—	7
Blackjack†	1d3/2d6***	—	3

Blowgun†	1d3/1d5	20/40/60	6
Club	1d4	–	3
Crossbow*	1d6	80/160/240	30
Dagger†‡	1d4/1d10	10/20/30**	3
Dart	1d4	20/40/60**	5 sp
Flail	1d6	–	6
Garrote†	1/3d4	–	2
Handaxe	1d6	10/20/30**	4
Javelin	1d6	30/60/90**	1
Longbow*	1d6	70/140/210	40
Longsword	1d8	–	10
Mace	1d6	–	5
Polearm*	1d10	–	7
Shortbow*	1d6	50/100/150	25
Short sword	1d6	–	7
Sling	1d4	40/80/160**	2
Spear	1d8	–	3
Staff	1d4	–	5 sp
Two-handed sword*	1d10	–	15
Warhammer	1d6	–	5

* Two-handed weapon. Characters using two-handed weapons use a d16 on initiative checks.

** Strength modifier applies to damage with this weapon at close range only.

*** Damage dealt is always subdual damage.

† These weapons are particularly effective when used with the element of surprise. A thief who succeeds in a backstab attempt with one of these weapons uses the second damage value listed. All other classes and all other thief attacks use the first value.

‡ Characters generally purchase normal straight-edged daggers, but cultists, cave-dwellers, evil priests, alien worshippers, and other menacing villains carry curvy or ceremonial daggers known as athame, kris, or tumi.