

Checks like this are the heart of the game and are rolled all the time, in every mode of play, to determine the outcome of tasks. While the roll of the die is critical, the statistic you add to the roll (called a **modifier**) often makes the difference between success and failure. Every character is made up of many such statistics governing what the character is good at, each consisting of a relevant ability modifier plus a **proficiency** bonus, and sometimes modified further by other factors, such as bonuses or penalties from gear, spells, feats, magic items, and other special circumstances.

Proficiency is a simple way of assessing your character's general level of training and aptitude for a given task. It is broken into five different ranks: **untrained**, **trained**, **expert**, **master**, and **legendary**. Each rank grants a different proficiency bonus. If you're untrained at a statistic, your proficiency bonus is +0—you must rely solely on the raw potential of your ability modifier. If your proficiency rank for a statistic is trained, expert, master, and legendary, your bonus equals your character's level plus another number based on the rank (2, 4, 6, and 8, respectively). Proficiency ranks are part of almost every statistic in the game.

EXPLORATION

Most of the time, your character will explore the world, interact with characters, travel from place to place, and overcome challenges. This is called exploration. Game play is relatively free-form during exploration, with players responding to the narrative whenever they have an idea of what to do next. Leaving town via horseback, following the trail of a marauding orc tribe, avoiding the tribe's scouts, and convincing a local hunter to help in an upcoming fight are all examples of things that might occur during exploration.

Throughout this mode of play, the GM asks the players what their characters are doing as they explore. This is important in case a conflict arises. If combat breaks out, the tasks the PCs undertook while exploring might give them an edge or otherwise inform how the combat begins.

CONE

A cone shoots out from you in a quarter circle on the grid. When you aim a cone, the first square of that cone must share an edge with your space if you're aiming orthogonally, or it must touch a corner of your space if you're aiming diagonally. If you're Large or larger, the first square can run along the edge of any square of your space. You can't aim a cone so that it overlaps your space. The cone extends out for a number of feet, widening as it goes, as shown in the Areas diagram. For instance, when a green dragon uses its breath weapon, it breathes a cone of poisonous gas that originates at the edge of one square of its space and affects a quarter-circle area 30 feet on each edge.

If you make a cone originate elsewhere, use these same rules, with the first square of the cone using an edge or corner of that creature or object's space instead of your own.

EMANATION

An emanation issues forth from each side of your space, extending out to a specified number of feet in all directions. For instance, the *bless* spell's emanation radiates 5 or more feet outward from the caster. Because the sides of a creature's space are the starting point for the emanation, an emanation from a Large or larger creature affects a greater overall area than that of a Medium or smaller creature. Unless the text states otherwise, the creature creating an emanation effect chooses whether the creature at its center is affected.