

THE SWORD & BACKPACK RPG

In the world of Sword & Backpack you are a young explorer just beginning a career of high adventure in a fantastic and dangerous land. You live in a vast kingdom of boundless and supernatural wonder, of busy cities and sleepy villages, of gloomy dungeons and haunted ruins. You are eager to see and experience all of it, but because you are at the start of your adventure, you don't have much to your name! You will set out with an only a sword (or spell book or lock picks), a roomy backpack and a group of likeminded adventurers.

HOW TO PLAY

The Sword and Backpack RPG does not have many rules in the traditional sense. There are no stats, points, levels, or other hallmarks of gaming to keep track of, and the rules it does have should be considered rough guidelines rather than hard and fast edicts. It's a philosophy more than a system. The only essential items needed are;

- This book of rules
- Pencils
- A notebook or pad of paper
- A 20-sided die

After you have gathered your supplies, you must decide who will be the storyteller and who will be the adventurers.



THE STORYTELLER

The storyteller is just like a referee in any sport; he or she keeps track of the rules and ensures that everyone is playing fairly. A game of Sword & Backpack starts when the storyteller comes up with the idea for the adventure. It could be anything from rescuing a princess from a wicked king, or finding the goblin hideout and bringing them to justice!

The storyteller's main role is to narrate the action and decide when the players must roll their d20s. If you like coming up with your own stories, or making up your own games then you would make an excellent storyteller, as the storyteller also creates the world in which the game is played.

It is a great responsibility to play the storyteller. You must be fair, and you must be creative! The storyteller is not playing AGAINST the adventurers, the storyteller is playing WITH the adventurers.

Even though it will be your job to roll dice against the other players, you should encourage them to do well and have fun! Above all else, remember to give everyone a turn and do not give the players a challenge they cannot possibly overcome. There is no winning and losing in Sword & Backpack, but no one wants to play a game that is too hard to enjoy.

Once the storyteller has come up with the adventure it will be time to play. Keep your story or adventure a secret, let it unfold as the game unfolds. Use your notebook to write down notes for your stories such as the names of towns and dungeons where the adventurers will explore. Write down the challenges the adventurers must face like opening secret locked doors, tricking a village mayor into giving up gold, or the kinds of enemies they will fight like trolls and bandits! A good story has fun challenges, and a fun goal. Goals can be anything from saving the day, or finding a magic weapon. Be sure to reward the adventurers with gold and treasure (also known as loot!).

THE ADVENTURERS AND BONUSES

The adventurers are the characters you will play while acting out the story. You may pick from one of three adventuring jobs: the fighter, the wizard, or the rogue. The fighters is physically strong, and is good at fighting with weapons like swords and axes. A wizard is adept at magic, and can cast spells to overcome challenges or defeat monsters. Rogues are sneaky tricksters who excel at getting into locked places and finding traps! After you pick your job, you should pick your adventurer's name and your weapon, and then fill in your character sheet on the back of this book.

The adventurers are a team working together to overcome challenges in the face of great danger. In the world of Sword & Backpack adventurers usually travel in groups of three, one each of the adventuring jobs. Each member of the group should bring their own special talents to the table, but each member isn't completely limited by their choice of job. If you choose to play a wizard you can use swords and bows but with no bonus, likewise a fighter can use a *Scroll of Fireball* with no bonus, and only a rogue gets a bonus on picking locks or sneaking.

If you roll on a challenge that directly relates to your job, then you get a bonus of 5 that you get to add to your d20. For example, a fighter who swings a sword at an enemy will roll a d20, and then add 5 to the roll. If the fighter rolls a 10, it becomes 15. If a wizard decides to shoot a fireball at the same enemy then the wizard gains a bonus of 5 too. The storyteller must fairly decide when the adventurer gets a bonus.

As an adventurer, you will be interacting with the storyteller's world in any way you can imagine. Remember to bust open barrels, search under beds, work with the other adventurers like a team, and have fun!

Adventurers should take note of their quests and important details in their notebook.

THE WIZARD'S SPELLBOOK

The world of Sword & Backpack is full of intriguing magic! A good wizard has three spells memorized when the adventurer starts. Whenever more magic scrolls are found, the wizard can learn new spells. Young wizards can invent their own spells with the help of the storyteller, or choose from some of these spells:

- *Fireball* – shoot a fireball from the palm of your hand.
- *Waterfall* – a magic waterfall appears out of nowhere and washes away anyone caught in the flow.
- *Ray of Weakness* – a bright thin beam shoots from your eyes, causing the target to lose their next turn.
- *Everkeep Candle* – a magical flame emits from your fingertips, lighting the way.
- *Magic Toes* – make yourself or someone else fly for 3 rounds.

Each spell has a VERBAL and MANUAL requirement. Once the spell is being cast, the Storyteller will call for a roll if its appropriate. If successful, the spell works normally but on a failure the spell cannot be used for the rest of the scene.

THE FIGHTER'S WEAPONS

A good fighter is good at using any weapon he or she can find, and has a sturdy leather belt to hold those weapons. If you decide to adventure as a fighter, choose from a sword, a battleaxe, or a bow and arrows. Any great weapon also has a great name, so be sure to name your weapon! If you drop your weapon during a heated battle, feel free to use a nearby object. For example, throw a rock at your enemy.

THE ROGUE'S TOOL KIT

The rogue always starts with a dagger for fighting, but a smart rogue carries a tool kit in their adventuring backpack. The tool kit has lock picks for opening locked doors and chests, a couple of smoke bombs for hasty retreats, and a rope for climbing. Much like the Fighter's weapon, any adventuring rogue should have an adventuring title. For example, a good rogue may be named *Jeff The Sly*.

CHALLENGES AND COMBAT

When deciding a challenge, you must decide how difficult it is on a scale of 1 to 20. A challenge that is easy to overcome would be a low number, and a challenge that is difficult should be a high number. For example: An adventuring group has found a treasure chest but it is locked tight! A rogue would have a greater chance of opening the locked chest that has a difficulty of 8 because of their bonus, so a rogue adventurer must roll an 8 or higher on their d20 to open the chest. Each adventurer gets a bonus to rolls based on their job, this is explained in the adventurer section.

Remember to be fair when deciding the number for a challenge and not to make things too difficult, especially early in the story.

You should make the adventurers roll on challenges for some of these things: opening locked doors, jumping over large holes, finding and avoiding traps, or convincing the jail guards to release them! You can write challenges for almost anything.

Fighting is slightly different than challenges in Sword & Backpack. When an adventuring group decides to fight an enemy or monster, the storyteller will set a difficulty of the enemy they are encountering, players then must roll equal to or above that difficulty to land a hit (which deals a single wound). When an enemy attacks a character, the player must roll equal to or above the previously set difficulty to be able to avoid the attack. If the roll fails, the character suffers a wound. The Storyteller must the wounds and difficulty level of a monster. Easy monsters have 1-3 wounds/5+, difficult monsters have 4-6 wounds/10+, and hard monsters or boss fights can possess 7+ wounds/15+. Adventurers possess ten wounds. Wounds naturally recover one per day outside of magical healing.

Each adventure and monster must get a turn in each round! Have everyone roll a d20, including a d20 for the monster, whoever gets the highest number goes first.

THE DUNGEONPUNK MANIFESTO

1. Better living through adventure.
2. Be an intrepid adventurer and explorer first, a hack and slash tourist second.
3. Experience > Experience Points.
4. Warrior = drummer, Wizard = guitar player, Rogue = bass player. Everybody sings.
5. A good encounter should be like an awesome 7" single; a great adventure should be like a secret \$5 warehouse show; the best campaigns should be like an epic tour.
6. You are your class, but your class is not you.
7. There's no such thing as an inherently evil orc.
8. A sword and a backpack are your best friends.
9. D.I.Y.: Dungeoncrawl It Yourself.
10. Your character sheet and your dice are personal totems. Treat them as such.
11. Adventure and story trump the rules.
12. In fact, when in doubt, SCREW the rules.

-Rothbard & Gazpus 2013



Notes

Advanced Sword & Backpack

Character Advancement: At the end of each session the players gain 1-3 XP. Every 10 XP can be spent to do one of the following; gain +1 wound, gain +1 to their primary job (max +6), and gain +1 to A secondary job (max +3).

Critical Hits and Fumbles: On a natural roll of 20 an additional wound is dealt. On a natural 1 the attack misses and something else happens.

Weapons: Two Handed weapons deal an additional wound. If fighting with two weapons, the player gains +1 to their roll when attacking.

Armor: Light armor grants +1 wound, Medium armor grants +2 wounds, and Heavy armor grants +3 wounds. Shields grants +1 wound and can be sundered to completely ignore any single hit. additional wounds granted by armor refresh after a nights rest.

Gold Standard: For common goods/services the cost is d20 GP, for Quality goods/services the cost is d20x10, & for rare goods/services the cost is d20x20. Most magic spells and items can usually only be found through adventuring but on the rare chance that an enchanted item or spell can be bought it will be very expensive and require more than just gold...

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