



# DYNAMIC TRAVEL SYSTEM

BY TWINSTEEL

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The background of the entire page is a dark, atmospheric photograph. It depicts a person standing in the center, facing away from the viewer and towards a large, arched stone structure that resembles a cave entrance or a ruined building. The person is holding a flaming torch in their right hand, which casts a warm, orange glow on the surrounding stone and the ground. The sky above is dark and filled with faint, distant stars. The overall mood is mysterious and adventurous.

## HOUSE RULES

NOT ALL THOSE WHO WANDER ARE LOST – J.R.R. TOLKIEN



# INTRODUCTION

The Dynamic Travel System makes travel more engaging and consequential. Rather than hand-waving travel or making one or two checks, this system allows the players to shape the journey and for their characters to contribute mechanically.

The system focuses on the concept of a Trip:

- Trip HP represents the danger & duration of the travel.
- Trip DC represents the difficulty of taking actions to speed up travel.
- Travel Rounds make up the Trip. During a round, each participant takes a turn.
- Travel Dice represent progression toward the destination, with their results subtracted from the Trip HP.
- On their turn, participants may attempt an ability check to gain advantage on their Travel Dice roll.
- Longer journeys may be divided into multiple legs, each its own Trip with its own Trip HP & DC.

## TRIP HP

Trip HP represents the likelihood that the party will face an encounter en route to their destination. Factors that increase the Trip HP include longer duration, lack of transportation, hazardous environments and aggressive inhabitants. Participants attempt to reduce Trip HP to zero by subtracting the results of their Travel Dice rolls. If the Trip HP has not reached zero by the end of the current Travel Round, there is an Event determined by the GM, usually a complication. Once Trip HP reaches zero, the trip is immediately over, and the party arrives at their destination.

A reasonable starting point for Trip HP is 10 per participant. This leads to one Event during the Trip on average. Increasing the HP increases the number of expected Events.

### EXAMPLE TRIP HP

HP	Description
40	Hike to a mountain citadel while avoiding bandits & bears
80	Ride a week on horseback through enemy territory to rendezvous with spies
200	Sail pirate-infested waters to a lost island surrounded by sea monsters in hurricane season

## TRIP DC

Participants roll all ability checks during the trip against the Trip DC, which represents the overall difficulty of travel and of actions taken to hasten progress. Factors that increase the Trip DC include difficult terrain, inclement weather and lack of time.

### EXAMPLE TRIP DCs

DC	Description
10	Ride between nearby towns on an established road in mild weather
15	Trek across the tundra during the rainy season with appropriate provisions
20	Cross a vast desert in the summer before the waxing moon begins to wane
25	Navigate a supernatural swamp filled with quicksand, flame spouts & rabid beasts

## PARTY ROLES

Before setting out, each participant selects a Party Role. If they meet the Requirement, they make the appropriate check against the current Trip DC. A participant may instead choose to assist with a Party Role, granting advantage on the check. Success grants the party a Benefit for the entire trip. Rangers may substitute Wisdom (Survival) for any Party Role check. Rangers in their Favored Terrain ignore Requirements.

### PARTY ROLES

Role	Check	Requirement	Benefit
Forager	Intelligence (Nature)	25 lbs inventory space per 4 PCs	Do not require rations during rests
Guide	Intelligence (Cartographer's Tools)	Cartographer's Tools	Reduce Trip DC by 2
Lookout	Wisdom (Perception)	Spyglass worth at least 25gp	Give party advantage on Initiative rolls
Outrider	Strength (Athletics)	Travel 100ft ahead of the party	Reduce Trip HP by 5

*The player and GM may discuss other roles, their requirements, and their benefits.*



# TRAVEL ROUNDS

Travel is broken into rounds, and each round is broken into turns. Each participant takes their turn starting to the left of the GM and moving around the table clockwise. During their turn, the participant will:

1. Narrate an action that aids in travel e.g., *"I cut down a tree to make a shortcut across a gorge."*
2. Roll the appropriate Ability Check against the Trip DC. They may not use a skill that has already been used during this trip.
3. Roll their Travel Dice (2d6) and subtract the total from the Trip HP, unless a Setback occurs.

The in-game duration of a Travel Round depends on the distance and pace of travel. Each turn may represent an hour for a journey of a few miles or weeks for lengthier ones. After all participants complete their turn, the Travel Round ends. If the Trip HP has not reached zero, there is an Event determined by the GM. Events may be social, environmental or combat in nature.

## TRAVEL DICE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Ability Check Success:** If the check succeeds, roll Travel Dice with advantage (roll 3d6 and keep the two highest).
- **Ability Check Failure:** If the check fails, roll Travel Dice normally (roll 2d6)
- **Ability Check Fumble:** If the check roll is a natural 1, roll Travel Dice with disadvantage (roll 3d6 and keep the two lowest).
- **Ranger Proficiency:** Rangers add their proficiency bonus to their Travel Dice rolls.
- **Ranger Favored Terrain:** Rangers in their favored terrain may reroll all ones on Travel Dice rolls.
- **Druid Specialized Terrain:** Circle of the Land Druids in their chosen terrain add their proficiency bonus to their Travel Dice rolls.

## SETBACKS

If the Travel Dice roll is double ones, there is a Setback and nothing is subtracted from the Trip HP.

### EXAMPLE SETBACKS

d6	Setback	Effect
1	Damaged Transport (e.g., broken axle)	Increase Trip DC by 1d3
2	Persistent Wound (e.g., gouged eye)	Lose the benefit from roller's Party Role this Trip
3	Blocked Path (e.g., landslide)	Add 2d6 to the Trip HP
4	Inclement Weather (e.g., blizzard)	All travelers take 1 level of exhaustion
5	Lost (e.g., maze-like caves)	Party cannot rest until the end of the roller's next turn
6	Damaged Equipment (e.g., salt corrosion)	-1 to weapon attack & damage rolls until repaired

## TRAVEL WEARINESS

Trips that last longer than one day give all participants Travel Weariness with the following effects:

- They cannot gain the benefits of a Long Rest.
- They must rest for eight hours to gain the benefits of a Short Rest.

After the trip ends, characters must rest and perform light activity to end these effects. After as many days of rest as there were days in the trip, up to a maximum of one week, the Travel Weariness ends.

## CAMP

After any turn, the party may choose to make Camp if they wish to Short Rest. This ends the current Travel Round and triggers an Event. After the Event, the party may make Camp. The party must spend an entire day setting up camp, resting, then breaking camp.

Each participant selects a Camp Role. If they meet the Requirement, they make the appropriate check against the current Trip DC. Rangers may substitute Wisdom (Survival) for any Camp Role check. After eight hours, the party gains the benefits of a Short Rest. The next Travel Round begins where the last left off.

### CAMP ROLES

Role	Check	Requirement	Benefit
Cook	Intelligence (Cook's Utensils)	Rations	Max result on first HD
Entertainer	Charisma (Performance)	Instrument	Recover 1 level of Exhaustion
Medic	Wisdom (Medicine)	Healer's Kit	Recover 1 HD
Smithy	Strength (Smith's Tools)	Fire	Repair damaged equipment

*The player and GM may discuss other roles, their requirements, and their benefits.*

## CREDITS

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- Campfire photo by [CHUTTERSNAPE](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## INSPIRATIONS

- Optional Rule: *Perilous Journeys in 5e* [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)
- [Running a Maze or Labyrinth with Cards \(D&D 5e\)](#) by AmazingWizard
- *Vault 5e: Uncharted Journeys For Dungeons & Dragons* by Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd
- *Adventures in Middle Earth Player's Guide* p164-176 by Sophisticated Games Ltd. & Cubicle 7 Entertainment Ltd
- *Worlds Without Number* by Kevin Crawford
- Sly Flourish's [Lazy GM Resource Document: Wilderness & Travel Exploration](#)
- [Making Travel Interesting | Running The Game](#) by Matthew Colville
- [Re:Making Overland Travel Interesting](#) by Zipperon Disney
- [Travel Turns, D&D Overland Travel | Cmiike's D&D 5e Fix](#) by Fables D20
- [Dungeon Tables: Travel Challenges and Complications, Part 1](#)

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