

[The Assassin class comes from the original Player's Handbook (PH1). Unfortunately, the game has evolved quite a bit since then, so here is a newer version with a slight face-lift to make it more fun and playable.]

ASSASSIN

Assassins are a sub-class of the thieves with many of the same abilities as well as unique talents all their own. Unless otherwise specified, assassins conform to all the same rules and restrictions as their parent class, thieves. To be an assassin, a character must have a minimum strength of 12, intelligence of 11, and dexterity of 12. Assassins never gain experience point bonuses for having high ability scores.

Just as thieves, assassins get six-sided dice (d6) for hit points. Assassins begin with three weapons of proficiency and two non-weapon skill slots. Assassins gain a new weapon skill every four levels (5th, 9th, 13th, etc) and have a non-proficiency penalty of -2. Assassins use the same combat and saving throw tables as thieves, although assassins can be proficient with and use any weapon as well as shields, making them generally superior in combat situations. Assassins do not generally wear armor heavier than leather.

Assassins are almost always of evil alignment (as the killing of humans and other intelligent life forms for the purpose of profit is basically held to be the antithesis of goodness), although there are some notable, rare exceptions. Non-evil assassins are most often true neutral in ethics, using their skills to keep themselves alive in a hostile world. A small minority of assassins are lawful neutral, using their skills in order to benefit society or a religious order by removing intractable menaces which could not be attacked directly, for instance. In any event, assassins are never of good alignment.

The primary function of an assassin is to kill. Accordingly, assassins may use poison without restriction, although they do not gain any automatic ability in this regard (such skills as poison usage or poison identification must still be learned normally). Using poison, however, can be hazardous to the assassin; in addition to accidental mishaps or fumbles, most individuals who realize an individual has an envenomed weapon will either attack, call for help, or otherwise thwart the assassin. Nearly every culture views the use of poison as lowly, evil, and without honor, reacting appropriately. Most blade poisons are clearly visible to all observers within 10' of a drawn weapon.

In order to kill as effectively as possible, assassins study anatomy and physiology. Because of their training, assassins enjoy a +1 damage for every two levels of experience (round up), just as monks. In addition, assassins have the same ability to backstab an opponent as a thief of the same level. These bonuses are in addition to relevant bonuses for strength, magical or quality weapons, etc.

Example: Taltos the 11th lvl assassin successfully backstabs a minotaur. Taltos rolls normal damage and adds +6 (for his knowledge of anatomy) and then quadruples the total. On his next strike, Taltos is limited to only his +6 damage for anatomy.

The secondary function of assassins is spying. These missions can be coupled with murder or the theft of an item. Accordingly, assassins have thieving skills which function at two levels below their assassin level. A 4th level assassin, for instance, has the same thieving abilities as a 2nd level thief.

Like thieves, assassins can use either the rules from the PH1 (fixed-skill percentages) or PH2 (slightly lower-valued, character-controlled percentages). Assassins who use the PH1 rules have the same skills as zero level thieves while 1st level, progressing to the same skills as half-level thieves when they achieve 2nd as assassins, and on to 1st level thieves when the assassin finally reaches the 3rd level of experience. From this point forward, PH1 assassins rise in skill as a thief of two levels below their own assassin level. Assassins who use the PH2 rules begin with the same initial thief skill percentages, but have NO discretionary points to spend. Upon reaching 2nd, the assassin gains 30 discretionary points, with another 30 points for each level gained hereafter, effectively giving them a two level disadvantage with regard to the skills of a regular thief.

Assassins have a few unique abilities of their own as well. These include disguise and linguistic decryption. All assassins have a percentage chance to disguise themselves. In general, an assassin can appear to be up to three inches shorter or six inches taller, appear to weigh twenty pounds less or nearly 100 pounds more, and appear to be members of either gender and any similarly-sized and -shaped race. Disguise allows an assassin to appear to be virtually any class or character, from a simple pilgrim, to a wealthy merchant, to a powerful wizard. An assassin may even emulate the attitudes and airs of members of a higher social level (up to +1 per level of the assassin).

The assassin's disguise skill has a base chance of success, modified by the situation and the assassin's proficiency. This skill begins with a base 50% chance of success. Assassins using the PH1 skill advancement automatically gain +5% per level while PH2 assassins must use discretionary points to raise their percentage. Any disguise roll missed by 21% or more means that not only was the masquerade penetrated, but the assassin's real identity was revealed, otherwise, the viewer notes merely that the assassin is wearing some sort of disguise. What and to whom the assassin attempts to masquerade himself may significantly alter the odds of success, as can the situation an assassin finds himself in. There is ALWAYS a 1% (natural roll of 00) chance of failure. A list of cumulative modifiers for the disguise skill is given below:

- +20% casual situation (just another member of a crowd, minimal contact, assassin avoid encounter, etc)
- 5% per distinct, difficult-to-emulate characteristic (unusual hair, body shape, speech, behavior, etc)
- 5% per non-possessed skill feigned (farmer, sailor, healer, lawyer, etc)
- 5% * feigning another, distinct class (mage, cleric, fighter, paladin, etc)
- 10% * feigning opposite sex (male as female or vice versa)
- 15% * feigning another race (elf, dwarf, half-orc, half-elf, etc)
- 20% * disguised as a specific individual (King Urthur, Gurna Girthworthy, Mayor Quimby, etc)

- +10% when disguised as someone the assassin has knows well (studied carefully, close friend, etc)
- 10% when disguised as someone assassin isn't very familiar with (stranger, only seen a portrait, etc)
- 20% when dealing with someone familiar with the assassin or individual (neighbor, friend, servant, etc)
- 40% when dealing with someone very familiar with assassin or individual (spouse, parent, sibling, etc)

- 20% if assassin takes half or more hit points while wearing disguise or otherwise partially revealed

* penalty doubled in a combat situation

All of these modifiers are cumulative, as illustrated below.

Example: Castrol is attempting to disguise himself as his long-time friend Brianna Talgris in order to sneak into the Mages' Guild. His base chance of success is 85% (he is either 7th lvl and using PH1 or has used 35 discretionary points and using PH2), although modifying for disguising himself as a summoner (-5%), a woman (-10%), a specific individual (-20%), but also a well known friend (+10%), give Castrol 60% chance of success. If Castrol can keep to minimal contact, this chance rises to 80% (+20% for casual contact) to pull off his masquerade. On the other hand, if Castrol met one of Brianna's students asking for help with a spell, his chance to fool the student would be only 55% (-5% for lack of skill [at least!] and -20% for dealing someone familiar with Brianna). If Castrol suddenly found himself confronted by Sean Talgris (Brianna's husband), his chances of success would drop to 35% (-20% MORE since he's very familiar with his wife). If Castrol was forced to run, fight, or "act unusual" (not cast a spell Brianna would or use one of her magical items or skills), he wouldn't possibly be able to fool Sean (the penalties for feigning a different class, gender, and individual would each double to -35% more for a total of 0%).

Example: Loiosh wishes to pass himself off as a simple member of the city watch (generic disguise). His normal percentage is 105% (he's either 11th lvl PH1 or has spent 55 points via PH2), modifying for the situation (different class -5%) gives 100% of success. So long as Loiosh avoids combat or scrutiny, there is little chance anyone will see through his disguise (although 00 always fails). But, other members of the guard ask for Loiosh's advice about a very obscure element of Greyhawkian law (-10% for two skills, general law, and specific laws of Greyhawk). Moreover, the guard asking is Loiosh's brother (-20% for very familiar with the assassin). Loiosh is down to a 70% chance of pulling off his disguise. And if his brother rolls 91% or higher (more than 20% above the base percentage), then not only will Loiosh's cover be blown, but his brother will immediately recognize Loiosh.

At higher levels, assassins are able to decrypt and learn the secret languages of other classes, such as druid and thieves' cant. This ability is initially gained at 9th level (Assassin) when the assassin may select one secret language. The assassin may learn another secret tongue with each advance in experience level thereafter, with no maximum number, although each of these languages requires a free language or skill slot to acquire. This skill only works with living (spoken) tongues and is of no use with dead (written) languages. This skill would, however, allow an assassin to learn drow sign language or some other active form of communication through observation.

Assassins never gain the thief ability to use magical scrolls at higher level.

Assassins suffer a -2 penalty to their social level and accordingly cannot have any sort of hirelings prior to 4th level. At 4th, an assassin has gained a sufficient presence and reputation so he or she may hire other assassins, although no one else will willingly and trustingly serve such a low level assassin. Upon achieving 8th level, an assassin may also include thieves and fighters amongst his or her hirelings. When an assassin reaches 12th level, there is no restriction on the class of individual an assassin can hire into service, although usually only neutral or evil beings will serve a hired killer. Prior to becoming a Guildmaster of Assassins (14th level), it is very unlikely that an assassin will gain any followers or henchmen. A low level assassin could always use a disguise in order to hire servants, although such retainers, whether men-at-arms or maids, will almost certainly leave service the instant they discover the duplicity of their employer.

In order for an assassin PC to gain experience levels above the 13th (Prime Assassin), he or she must have the requisite experience points and then either assassinate the local Guildmaster Assassin (14th level) or challenge him or her to a duel to the death. Likewise, a 14th level assassin must journey to the place where the world's Grandfather of Assassins (15th level) has his or her headquarters and slay him or her by assassination or duel. Note that duplicity, trickery, ambush, and all forms of treachery are considered fair by assassins. A higher level character can accept a challenge and then have the challenger slain by archers, for instance.

An assassin PC need not be a member of the Assassins' Guild of the region he or she dwells in, but all NPC assassins living there will be. Such guilds are found only in very large, urban regions and control an area of 10 to 100 miles radius around the headquarter town or city. This control is not usually direct, but the local rulers hold their position through the tacit approval of the assassins. Any PC assassin discovered within the territory of a guild will be invited to join, thus coming under the authority and command of the Guildmaster Assassin. The PC need not accept the offer, but he or she will be marked for death if he performs an assassination within the guild's area of control.

The headquarters of an assassins' guild is always within a large town or big city, usually near major trade route or regions of political intrigue. It must not be a noticeable fortress or an ostentatious place. It is typically a warehouse or other nondescript structure, with safeguards and traps added. This avoids attention and unwanted notoriety. Most assassins' guilds are closely allied with the local thieves' guilds. All expenses of maintaining the guild and its members -- excluding the Guildmaster -- are assumed to be fully paid for by normal guild activities. Any improvements, changes, expenses, needs of the leader, and all other special costs must be borne by the Guildmaster Assassin.

A Guildmaster Assassin has a body of guild members which numbers between 7 and 28. Upon chance of leadership it is 75% likely that each guild member will leave the area. Thus it will be necessary for a new Guildmaster to allow new member into the guild. The new assassins will be 1st level and must be "worked up" in experience levels. The maximum number of such "followers" of the local guild is the Guildmaster's level plus his maximum number of henchman, although these are in addition to "normal" henchmen. Note that guild members are loyal only to strength, power, and profit.

The headquarters of the Grandfather of Assassins can be virtually anywhere and of any form -- cavern, castle, monastery, palace, temple, you name it. However, if it is a large, obvious place, the headquarters must be located well away from all communities -- such as in the midst of a murky wood, a dismal marsh or fen, a lonely moor, a deserted island, a remote coast, or far into forsaken hills or atop a mountain. Upon attaining the headship of all assassins, a new Grandfather or Grandmother who was not the protegé of the previous leader must pay all remaining followers of the former head 100gp for each of their experience levels, destroy the old headquarters, and construct a new one somewhere else.

A list of minimum assassination fees is found on page #29 of the PH1, although these should serve as rough guidelines of TYPICAL fees paid.

ASSASSIN (Thief) TABLE

Experience Points	Level	d6 for Hit Points	Level Title
0 1,500	1	1	Bravo (Apprentice)
1,501 3,000	2	2	Rutterkin
3,001 6,000	3	3	Waghalter
6,001 12,000	4	4	Murderer
12,001 25,000	5	5	Thug
25,001 50,000	6	6	Killer
50,001 100,000	7	7	Cutthroat
100,001 200,000	8	8	Executioner
200,001 300,000	9	9	Assassin
300,001 425,000	10	10	Expert Assassin
425,001 575,000	11	11	Senior Assassin
575,001 750,000	12	12	Chief Assassin
750,001 1,000,000	13	13	Prime Assassin
1,000,001 1,500,000	14	14	Guildmaster Assassin
1,500,001+	15	15	Grandfather of Assassins

PH1	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Find Traps	Move Silently	Hide in Shadows	Hear Noises	Climb Walls	Read Lang	Disguise
NON	10	8	5	5	5	10	40	0	20
0th	20	17	10	10	10	10	50	0	40
1/2th	25	21	15	10	10	10	65	0	45
1st	30	25	20	15	10	10	85	0	50
2nd	35	29	25	21	15	10	86	0	55
3rd	40	33	30	27	20	15	87	0	60
4th	45	37	35	33	25	15	88	20	65
5th	50	42	40	40	31	20	90	25	70
6th	55	47	45	47	37	20	92	30	75
7th	60	52	50	55	43	25	94	35	80
8th	65	57	55	62	49	25	96	40	85
9th	70	62	60	70	56	30	98	45	90
10th	80	67	65	78	63	30	99	50	95
11th	90	72	70	86	70	35	99.1	55	100
12th	100	77	75	94	77	35	99.2	60	105
13th	105	82	80	99	85	40	99.3	65	110
14th	110	87	85	99	93	40	99.4	70	115
15th	115	92	90	99	99	50	99.5	75	120
16th	125	97	95	99	99	50	99.6	80	125
17th	125	99	99	99	99	55	99.7	80	130

PH2	add +0 discretionary points at 1st & +30 points/level thereafter								
1st	15	10	5	10	5	15	60	0	50
2nd	15	10	5	10	5	15	60	0	50

DEX adj					
9	-15	-10	-10	-20	-10
10	-10	-5	-10	-15	-5
11	-5		-5	-10	
12				-5	
13 to 15					
16		+5			
17	+5	+10		+5	+5
18	+10	+15	+5	+10	+10
19	+15	+20	+10	+15	+15

Racial adj									
dwarf		+10	+15				-10	-5	-5
elf	+5	-5		+5	+10	+5			-5
gnome		+5	+10	+5	+5	+10	-15		-10
half-elf	+10				+5				
half-orc	-5	+5	+5			+5	+5	-10	-10

Armor adj							
none	+5			+10	+5		+10
elven chain	-20	-5	-5	-10	-10	-5	-20
studded	-30	-10	-10	-20	-20	-10	-30
chain/ring	-40	-15	-15	-40	-30	-20	-40
plate	-75	-40	-40	-80	-75	-70	-95