BASIC D20 ALIGNMENT

The alignment system in d20 games is difficult to use because there are no definite game rules covering alignment. Vital to any alignment system are rules to govern alignment shifts. Normally, it is left to the DM to decide if a player portrays his character's alignment correctly. If the player's roleplaying is found lacking, then the DM must use his own judgment, and the few guidelines given in the rulebooks, to decide if an alignment shift is appropriate. There are no game mechanics to fall back on.

In this system, both the ethical (law-chaos) and moral (good-evil) components of alignment are given a score on a scale of 0 to 20. The number 10 represents neutrality on both axes. Scores of 20 indicate a maximum of law and good, while scores of 0 indicate a maximum of chaos and evil. Thus, a thoroughly chaotic good character would have an ethics score of 0 and a morality score of 20. Conversely, a diabolically lawful evil character would have a 20 in ethics and a 0 in morality.

ETHICS AND MORALITY

Ethical Alignment Component	Ethics Score Range
Lawful	14-20
Neutral	7-13
Chaotic	0-6

Moral Alignment Component	Morality Score Range
Good	14-20
Neutral	7-13
Evil	0-6

The tables above show the score ranges that correspond to the various alignments. Lawful ranges from 14 to 20, chaotic ranges from 0 to 6. Neutral with respect to law and chaos ranges from 7 to 13. Good ranges from 14 to 20, evil from 0 to 6, and neutral with respect to good and evil from 7 to 13.

Starting scores for new characters are shown in the table below.

Ethical Alignment Component	Starting Ethics Score
Lawful	17
Neutral	10
Chaotic	3

Moral Alignment Component	Starting Morality Score
Good	17
Neutral	10
Evil	3

THE ALIGNMENT CHECK

After every game session, the DM should determine each character's predominant behavior pattern during the adventure. The DM should determine if the character's action were in keeping with lawful, chaotic, or neutral behavior on the ethical scale and good, evil, or neutral on the morality scale. After this determination, make alignment checks. An alignment check consists of rolling a d20 and comparing it to the character's ethics or morality score. The process is as follows:

1. Lawful Behavior - If the character behaved in a predominantly lawful manner, roll a d20 and compare it to the character's ethics score. If the roll exceeds the character's ethics score, add one point to the

ethics score. If the roll is less than or equal to the ethics score, there is no change to the ethics score. A roll of natural '20' always results in adding one to the ethics score.

2.   Chaotic Behavior - If the character behaved in a predominantly chaotic manner, roll a d20 and compare it to the character's ethics score. If the roll is less than the character's ethics score, subtract one from the ethics score. If the roll is greater than or equal to the ethics score, there is no change to the ethics score. A roll of natural '1' always results in subtracting one from the ethics score.

3. Ethically Neutral Behavior - If the character behaved in a predominantly neutral manner, roll a d20 and compare it to the ethics score. If the character's ethics score is higher than 10 and the roll is less than the ethics score, then subtract one from the ethics score. If the character's ethics score is less than 10 and the roll is greater than the ethics score, add one to the ethics score. If the character's ethics score is equal to 10, there is no change to the ethics score. And in all other cases, there is no change to the ethics score.

4. Good Behavior - If the character behaved in a predominantly good manner, roll a d20 and compare it to the character's morality score. If the roll exceeds the character's morality score, add one point to the morality score. If the roll is less than or equal to the morality score, there is no change to the morality score. A roll of natural '20' always results in adding one to the morality score.

5. Evil Behavior - If the character behaved in a predominantly evil manner, roll a d20 and compare it to the character's morality score. If the roll is less than the character's morality score, subtract one from the morality score. If the roll is greater than or equal to the morality score, there is no change to the morality score. A roll of natural '1' always results in subtracting one from the morality score.

6. Morally Neutral Behavior - If the character behaved in a predominantly neutral manner, roll a d20 and compare it to the morality score. If the character's morality score is higher than 10 and the roll is less than the morality score, then subtract one from the morality score. If the character's morality score is less than 10 and the roll is greater than the morality score, add one to the morality score. If the character's morality score is equal to 10, there is no change to the morality score. And in all other cases, there is no change to the morality score.

CHANGING ALIGNMENTS

When a character's alignment changes, the ethics or morality score becomes the score listed as the starting score above (which is in the middle of the range for that alignment). For example, if a character's ethics score goes from 13 to 14, indicating an alignment change from neutral to lawful, the character's ethics score immediately changes to 17. Thus, characters must dedicate themselves to their former alignment for quite some time if they wish to regain it.

Some examples may clarify.

Example #1 - A character performs a major act during the adventure that the GM considers chaotic. After the adventure, the GM rules that the character acted in a predominantly chaotic manner. The character's ethics score is 15. The player rolls a d20 and gets an 11. Since this result is less than the character's ethics score (of 15), the GM orders the player to subtract 1 from the character's ethics score. The character now has an ethics score of 14. She's still lawful, for now.

Example #2 - During the next adventure, this same character performs a great act of heroism, risking her life to save hundreds of innocents. The GM determines that this act merits an alignment check for good behavior after the adventure. The player rolls a d20 and the result is a 20. Since the character's morality score is 17, her morality is increased by one for a new total of 18.

Example #3 - A few adventures later, our character commits an act of evil. The player rolls a d20 and gets an 18. Since this roll is equal to the character's morality score, there is no change.

Example #4 - The character commits a significant act of chaos during the next session. The player rolls the dice and gets a result of 7. As a result, the character's ethics score is now 13. Since this indicates neutrality an alignment change has occurred. The character's ethics score becomes 10, the middle value for neutrality. Only consistent lawful behavior will allow the character to regain her old alignment.

MORAL SUPPORT

This system is designed to make it increasingly harder to become more lawful, chaotic, good, or evil. The higher (or lower) your score, the harder it is to make the actions in keeping with your alignment count towards increasing your alignment score. To become more good, you must beat your morality score when you make alignment checks for good behavior. To become more evil, you must roll less than your morality score when you make alignment checks for evil behavior. It is very easy to slip (with either an act of goodness or an act of cruelty) and start moving towards neutrality. This system makes it challenging to continue following an extreme alignment. Likewise, it is hard to remain neutral if the character consistently engages in behavior favoring one alignment over the other.

Bringing a "score" into the alignment system gives players an incentive to play alignment correctly. The GM calls for alignment checks, but a roll determines the results. This makes the job of the GM easier by giving alignment change an air of objectivity. Players are more likely to accept the results of a failed roll than the arbitrary judgment of a GM. Of course, even with this system, the GM ALWAYS retains the right to adjust a character's alignment. The GM may determine that a single act changes a character's alignment and force an alignment change.

The GM should remember to call for alignment checks when a player plays an alignment correctly. If alignment checks are called for only when transgressions occur, all characters will eventually be forced to shift alignment. The GM should also call for alignment checks only for significant behavior. A paladin who squashes an innocent bug is not risking his immortal soul by committing an evil act.