Sage Advice Compendium

Questions and answers about the rules of fifth edition Dungeons & Dragons appear in Sage Advice, a monthly column on the D&D website (dnd.wizards.com). This document compiles most of them and organizes them by topic, after first noting what the game's official rules references are.

If you have a question that you'd like addressed in Sage Advice, please contact the game's rules manager, Jeremy Crawford, on Twitter (@JeremyECrawford). If the question is too long for a tweet, please email it to sageadvice@wizards.com.

Rules References

The fifth edition of D&D has three official rulebooks, each of which was first published in 2014:

- *Player's Handbook* (abbreviated *PH*)
- *Monster Manual* (abbreviated *MM*)
- *Dungeon Master's Guide* (abbreviated *DMG*)

The free *Basic Rules* contains portions of those three books and can be downloaded here:

http://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/basicrules

Play in the Adventurers League, the D&D organized play program, is also governed by the Adventurers League Player's Guide.

Errata

Corrections have been issued for the early printings of the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*, *Monster Manual*, and *Dungeon Master's Guide* and can be downloaded at the following locations:

http://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/PH-Errata.pdf

http://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/MM-Errata.pdf

http://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/DMG-Errata.pdf

The corrections have been incorporated into more recent printings of the books, as well as into the *Basic Rules*.

We have also issued corrections for the adventures *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* and *Princes of the Apocalypse*:

http://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/HotDQ-Errata.pdf

http://media.wizards.com/2016/downloads/DND/PotA-Errata.pdf

A corrected version of any of these books includes one of the following lines near the bottom of its credits page:

This printing includes corrections to the first printing.
This printing includes corrections.

Official Rulings

Official rulings on how to interpret unclear rules are made in Sage Advice. The public statements of the D&D team, or anyone else at Wizards of the Coast, are not official rulings; they are advice. One exception: the game's rules manager, Jeremy Crawford (@JeremyECrawford), can make official rulings and usually does so in Sage Advice and on Twitter.

Compiled Answers

Sage Advice answers that are relevant to the current state of the rules are compiled here. In other words, an answer that has become obsolete isn't included in this compilation.

The Role of Rules

Why even have a column like Sage Advice when a DM can just make a ruling? Rules are a big part of what makes D&D a game, rather than simply improvised storytelling. The game's rules are meant to help organize, and even inspire, the action of a D&D campaign. The rules are a tool, and we want our tools to be as effective as possible. No matter how good those tools might be, they need a group of players to bring them to life and a DM to guide their use.

The DM is key. Many unexpected things can happen in a D&D campaign, and no set of rules could reasonably account for every contingency. If the rules tried to do so, the game would become unplayable. An alternative would be for the rules to severely limit what characters can do, which would be counter to the open-endedness of D&D. The direction we chose for the current edition was to lay a foundation of rules that a DM could build on, and we embraced the DM's role as the bridge between the things the rules address and the things they don't.

In a typical D&D session, a DM makes numerous rules decisions—some barely noticeable and others quite obvious. Players also interpret the rules, and the whole group keeps the game running. There are times, though, when the design intent of a rule isn't clear or when one rule seems to contradict another.

Dealing with those situations is where Sage Advice comes in. This column doesn't replace a DM's adjudication. Just as the rules do, the column is meant to give DMs, as well as players, tools for tuning the game according to their tastes. The column should also reveal some perspectives that help you see parts of the game in a new light and that aid you in fine-tuning your D&D experience.

When I answer rules questions, I often come at them from one to three different perspectives.

RAW. "Rules as written"—that's what RAW stands for. When I dwell on the RAW interpretation of a rule, I'm studying what the text says in context, without regard to the designers' intent. The text is forced to stand on its own.

Whenever I consider a rule, I start with this perspective; it's important for me to see what you see, not what I wished we'd published or thought we published.

RAI. Some of you are especially interested in knowing the intent behind a rule. That's where RAI comes in: "rules as intended." This approach is all about what the designers meant when they wrote something. In a perfect world, RAW and RAI align perfectly, but sometimes the words on the page don't succeed at communicating the designers' intent. Or perhaps the words succeed with one group of players but fail with another.

When I write about the RAI interpretation of a rule, I'll be pulling back the curtain and letting you know what the D&D team meant when we wrote a certain rule.

RAF. Regardless of what's on the page or what the designers intended, D&D is meant to be fun, and the DM is the ringmaster at each game table. The best DMs shape the

game on the fly to bring the most delight to his or her players. Such DMs aim for RAF, "rules as fun."

We expect DMs to depart from the rules when running a particular campaign or when seeking the greatest happiness for a certain group of players. Sometimes my rules answers will include advice on achieving the RAF interpretation of a rule for your group.

I recommend a healthy mix of RAW, RAI, and RAF!

Why does the errata change X and not Y? The errata for the first printing of the *Player's Handbook* sparked a number of questions. Why did we make the changes we made? Why didn't we make other changes? Did we change certain things, such as Empowered Evocation, because they were overpowered?

The answer to such questions is straightforward: we fixed mistakes in the text. The errata fixes text that was incomplete or off the mark in the original printing of the book. In the new edition, the errata process is strictly for the correction of such things. Rebalancing and redesigning game elements is the domain of playtesting, Unearthed Arcana articles, new design, and possible revision later in the edition's lifespan.

We play the game often, and we regularly review Twitter posts, Reddit discussions, website forums, survey results, emails, and customer service reports about the game. You have concerns about the *contagion* spell? We know about them. You feel the Beastmaster is underpowered? We've had our eye on that subclass for a while. In fact, we have a long list of things in the game that we keep an eye on and that we expect to experiment with in the months and years ahead.

But that experimentation is unrelated to errata. Corrections—that's what errata is about. If you read the errata document and think, "We were already playing Empowered Evocation the way it appears in the errata," then the errata process is working as intended. It's not intended to be filled with new design surprises. It's meant to repair spots where we forgot to tell you something, where we inadvertently told you the wrong thing, or where some of you grasped our design intent and others didn't, as a result of the text not being clear enough.

Fifth edition now belongs to the thousands of groups playing it. It would be inappropriate for the design team to use errata as a way to redesign the game. When we come across something that is more of a redesign than a correction, we put it into a queue of things to playtest and possibly publish at a later date. We'll let you know if a redesign is around the corner!

Character Creation

How do you calculate a creature's Armor Class (AC)? Chapter 1 of the *Player's Handbook* (p. 14) describes how to determine AC, yet AC calculations generate questions frequently. That fact isn't too surprising, given the number of ways the game gives you to change your AC!

Here are some ways to calculate your base AC:

Unarmored: 10 + your Dexterity modifier.
Armored: Use the AC entry for the armor you're wearing (see *PH*, 145). For example, in leather armor, you calculate your AC as 11 + your Dexterity modifier, and in chain mail, your AC is simply 16.
Unarmored Defense (Barbarian): 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Constitution modifier.
Unarmored Defense (Monk): 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Wisdom modifier.
Draconic Resilience (Sorcerer): 13 + your Dexterity modifier.
Natural Armor: 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your natural armor bonus. This is a calculation method typically used only by monsters and NPCs, although it is also relevant to a druid or another character who assumes a form that has natural armor.

These methods—along with any others that give you a formula for calculating your AC—are mutually exclusive; you can benefit from only one at a time. If you have access to more than one, you pick which one to use. For example, if you're a sorcerer/monk, you can use either Unarmored Defense or Draconic Resilience, not both. Similarly, a druid/barbarian who transforms into a beast form that has natural armor can use either the beast's natural armor or Unarmored Defense (you aren't considered to be wearing armor with natural armor).

What about a shield? A shield increases your AC by 2 while you use it. For example, if you're unarmored and use a shield, your AC is 12 + your Dexterity modifier. Keep in mind that some AC calculations, such as a monk's Unarmored Defense, prohibit the use of a shield.

Once you have your base AC, it can be temporarily modified by situational bonuses and penalties. For instance, having half cover gives you a +2 bonus to your AC, and three-quarters cover gives a +5 bonus. Spells sometimes modify AC as well. *Shield of faith*, for example, grants a target a +2 bonus to AC until the spell ends.

Magic items can also enhance your AC. Here are a few examples: *+1 chain mail* gives you an AC of 17, a *ring of protection* gives you a +1 bonus to AC no matter what you're wearing, and *bracers of defense* grant you a +2 bonus to AC if you're not wearing armor or using a shield.

Racial Traits

Does the Trance trait allow an elf to finish a long rest in 4 hours? The intent is no. The Trance trait does let an elf meditate for 4 hours and then feel the way a human does after sleeping for 8 hours, but that isn't intended to shorten an elf's long rest. A long rest is a period of relaxation that is at least 8 hours long. It can contain sleep, reading, talking, eating, and other restful activity. Standing watch is even possible during it, but for no more than 2 hours; maintaining heightened vigilance any longer than that isn't restful. In short, a long rest and sleep aren't the same thing; you can sleep when you're not taking a long rest, and you can take a long rest and not sleep.

Here's what this all means for an elf. An elf can spend 4 hours in a trance during a long rest and then has 4 additional hours of light activity. While an elf's companions are snoozing, the elf can be awake and engaged in a variety of activities, including carving a lovely trinket, composing a sonnet, reading a tome of ancient lore, attempting to remember something experienced centuries before, and keeping an eye out for danger. The Trance trait is, ultimately, meant to highlight the otherworldly character of elves, not to give them an edge in the game.

That all said, if you're the DM and you decide to let Trance shorten an elf's long rest, you're not going to break the game. You are making a world-building choice if you do so. You're deciding that elves, on a global scale, are ready to

reenter a fight before anyone else, that they heal faster than most humanoids, and that they regain their magical energy faster. Such a choice would make sense in a world where elves are the dominant race, where they not only live longer than others, but also recover faster.

Do the lightfoot halfling and wood elf hiding racial traits allow them to hide while observed? The lightfoot halfling and wood elf traits—Naturally Stealthy and Mask of the Wild—do allow members of those subraces to try to hide in their special circumstances even when observers are nearby. Normally, you can't hide from someone if you're in full view. A lightfoot halfling, though, can try to vanish behind a creature that is at least one size larger, and a wood elf can try to hide simply by being in heavy rain, mist, falling snow, foliage, or similar natural phenomena. It's as if nature itself cloaks a wood elf from prying eyes—even eyes staring right at the elf! Both subraces are capable of hiding in situations unavailable to most other creatures, but neither subrace's hiding attempt is assured of success; a Dexterity (Stealth) check is required as normal, and an observant foe might later spot a hidden halfling or elf: "I see you behind that guard, you tricksy halfling!"

CLASS FEATURES

When you use Extra Attack, do you have to use the same weapon for all the attacks? Extra Attack imposes no limitation on what you use for the attacks. You can use regular weapons, improvised weapons, unarmed strikes, or a combination of these options for the attacks.

BARBARIAN

Does the barbarian's Danger Sense work against breath weapons and enemies' special abilities? A barbarian's Danger Sense benefits any Dexterity saving throw against an effect that the barbarian can see.

For the barbarian's Reckless Attack, do you grant advantage to all enemies, or only to the target of your attack? If you use the barbarian's Reckless Attack, all attack rolls have advantage against you until the start of your next turn.

CLERIC

When a cleric uses the Destructive Wrath feature, does it maximize all damage getting rolled, as long as some of it is lightning or thunder? Destructive Wrath is meant to maximize lightning and thunder damage only.

DRUID

What happens if a druid wears metal armor? The druid explodes.

Well, not actually. Druids have a taboo against wearing metal armor and wielding a metal shield. The taboo has been part of the class's story since the class first appeared in *Eldritch Wizardry* (1976) and the original *Player's Handbook* (1978). The idea is that druids prefer to be protected by animal skins, wood, and other natural materials that aren't the worked metal that is associated with civilization. Druids don't lack the ability to wear metal armor. They choose not to wear it. This choice is part of their identity as a mystical order. Think of it in these terms: a vegetarian can eat meat, but the vegetarian chooses not to.

A druid typically wears leather, studded leather, or hide armor, and if a druid comes across scale mail made of a material other than metal, the druid might wear it. If you feel strongly about your druid breaking the taboo and donning metal, talk to your DM. Each class has story elements mixed with its game features; the two types of design go hand-in-hand in D&D, and the story parts are stronger in some classes than in others. Druids and paladins have an especially strong dose of story in their design. If you want to depart from your class's story, your DM has the final say on how far you can go and still be considered a member of the class. As long as you abide by your character's proficiencies, you're not going to break anything in the game system, but you might undermine the story and the world being created in your campaign.

Can a Circle of the Moon druid speak the languages it knows while in the form of an elemental? Yes, since the elementals listed in Elemental Wild Shape can speak.

If a druid in elemental form can speak, can the druid cast spells? A druid can cast spells in a Wild Shape form only upon gaining the Beast Spells feature at 18th level.

If a druid takes the Magic Initiate feat and chooses detect magic **as their one spell, can the druid cast that spell as a ritual?** A druid's Ritual Casting requires a ritual to be prepared. The spell from Magic Initiate is known but not prepared.

FIGHTER

Does the fighter's Action Surge feature let you take an extra bonus action, in addition to an extra action? Action Surge gives you an extra action, not an extra bonus action.

Can a fighter have two fighting styles active at once? Dueling and Defense, for example. You can benefit from more than one Fighting Style option at a time, as long as they aren't mutually exclusive, as Dueling and Great Weapon Fighting are.

Does the Archery fighting style work with a melee weapon that you throw? No, the Archery feature benefits ranged weapons. A melee weapon, such as a dagger or handaxe, is still a melee weapon when you make a ranged attack with it.

Is the Dueling fighting style intended to support a shield? Yes. A character with the Dueling option usually pairs a one-handed weapon with a shield, a spellcasting focus, or a free hand.

If you use Great Weapon Fighting with a feature like Divine Smite or a spell like hex, **do you get to reroll any 1 or 2 you roll for the extra damage?** The Great Weapon Fighting feature—which is shared by fighters and paladins—is meant to benefit only the damage roll of the weapon used with the feature. For example, if you use a greatsword with the feature, you can reroll any 1 or 2 you roll on the weapon's 2d6. If you're a paladin and use Divine Smite with the greatsword, Great Weapon Fighting doesn't let you reroll a 1 or 2 that you roll for the damage of Divine Smite.

The main purpose of this limitation is to prevent the tedium of excessive rerolls. Many of the limits in the game are aimed at inhibiting slowdowns. Having no limit would also leave the door open for Great Weapon Fighting to grant more of a damage boost than we intended, although

the potential for that is minimal compared to the likelihood that numerous rerolls would bog the game down.

Does the "when" in the Eldritch Knight's War Magic feature mean the bonus attack comes after you cast the cantrip, or can it come before? The intent is that the bonus attack can come before or after the cantrip. You choose when to take a bonus action during your turn, unless the bonus action specifies when it must take place (*PH*, 189).

MONK

If a monk uses a staff or another versatile weapon two-handed, does it still count as a monk weapon? Yes. A monk weapon must lack the two-handed property, but nothing prevents a monk from wielding such a weapon with two hands. Fundamentally, a monk weapon counts as such no matter how a monk uses it.

Does the Martial Arts feature turn monk weapons and unarmed strikes into finesse weapons? Nope. The feature grants a benefit that is similar to the finesse property, but the feature doesn't confer that property. It would say so if it did.

Does a monk's Purity of Body feature grant immunity to poison damage, the poisoned condition, or both? That feature grants immunity to both. As a result, a monk with Purity of Body can, for example, inhale a green dragon's poison breath unharmed.

Can the monk's Open Hand Technique push a Large or larger creature or knock it prone? The Open Hand Technique intentionally ignores creature size. A monk's ki fuels many extraordinary effects! If a feature is limited by creature size, the feature tells you so.

Does a monk need to spend any ki points to cast minor illusion granted by the Shadow Arts feature? No. The ki point cost in the feature applies only to the other spells in it.

For a Way of the Shadow monk, can their silence be dispelled? A spell is a spell, no matter its source. When you cast a spell through a feature, the spell is subject to the normal spellcasting rules, unless the feature says otherwise.

PALADIN

See the fighter section for questions on the Fighting Style feature.

Would a Paladin's Divine Sense register a tiefling due to their infernal heritage? A tiefling is a humanoid, not a fiend, and therefore escapes the notice of Divine Sense. The feature detects creatures that have the celestial, fiend, or undead creature type.

RANGER

See the fighter section for questions on the Fighting Style feature.

There is no component pouch option in the Ranger's starting equipment. Does the class not need one nor a focus for spells? A ranger follows the spellcasting rules in chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*, including the rule on components. A ranger typically uses a component pouch for the material components of spells, but doesn't start with one because rangers don't have spells at 1st level.

Can a ranger move between the attack rolls of the Whirlwind Attack feature? No. Whirlwind Attack is unusual, in that it's a single attack with multiple attack rolls. In most other instances, an attack has one attack roll. The rule on moving between attacks (*PH*, 190) lets you move between weapon attacks, not between the attack rolls of an exceptional feature like Whirlwind Attack.

ROGUE

Can a rogue use Sneak Attack more than once per round? Yes, but no more than once per turn. In combat, a round comprises the turns of the combatants (see the *Player's Handbook*, p. 189). Many features in the game, such as Extra Attack, specify that they work only on your turn. The Sneak Attack description specifies that you can use the feature once per turn, but it's not limited to your turn. The feature also doesn't limit the number of times you can use it in a round.

This rule is relevant because you sometimes get a chance to use Sneak Attack on someone else's turn. The most common way for this to happen is when a foe provokes an opportunity attack from you. If the requirements for Sneak Attack are met, your opportunity attack can benefit from that feature. Similarly, a fighter could use Commander's Strike to grant you an attack on the fighter's turn, and if the attack qualifies, it can use Sneak Attack. Both of those options rely on your reaction, so you could do only one of them in a round.

Because of getting only one reaction per round, you're unlikely to use Sneak Attack more than twice in a round: once with your action and once with your reaction.

Can a thief use the Fast Hands feature to activate a magic item? No. One of the benefits of Fast Hands is being able to take the Use an Object action as a bonus action, but using a magic item doesn't fall under Use an Object, as explained in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (p. 141). In contrast, using a nonmagical item, such as a healer's kit, is in the domain of Use an Object.

Can a rogue use Evasion if they are surprised? The rule states that if you are surprised, you can't move or take an action. A surprised rogue can use Evasion, since that feature doesn't require the rogue to take an action or move.

Does Uncanny Dodge work automatically against every attack a rogue or ranger gets hit by? Spell attacks too? A use of Uncanny Dodge works against only one attack, since it expends your reaction, and only if you can see the attacker. It works against attacks of all sorts, including spell attacks, but it is no help against a spell or other effect, such as *fireball*, that delivers its damage through a saving throw rather than an attack roll.

For triggering the rogue's Assassinate ability, when does a creature stop being surprised? After their turn in the round, or at the end of the round? The intent is that a surprised creature stops being surprised at the end of it's first turn in combat.

SORCERER

If a sorcerer casts a spell with only verbal or somatic components using Subtle Spell, can an opponent use counterspell against it? Subtle Spell protects a spell without material components from *counterspell*, since you can't see the casting.

Metamagic rules state you can't use multiple Metamagic options on a single spell. Can you use one option multiple times? The intent is that a sorcerer can use one Metamagic option once with a spell, not the same option more than once.

Does Quickened Spell allow a sorcerer to cast two spells a round of 1st level or higher? No, the sorcerer must follow the normal rule for casting a bonus action spell and a second spell; the second spell must be a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

Does a sorcerer's Wild Magic Surge effect replace the effect of the spell that triggered it, or do both effects happen? The spell and the Wild Magic Surge effect both happen.

WARLOCK

Do warlock spells granted by the Expanded Spell List feature count against the number of spells known? The spells granted by that feature aren't automatically known by a warlock. Those spells are added to the warlock spell list for the character, who can choose them when learning a new warlock spell of the appropriate level. Once learned, such a spell does count against the number of spells the warlock knows.

If a warlock uses Pact of the Blade to bond with a magic weapon, does that weapon have to be a melee weapon, and can the warlock change the weapon's form? The warlock's Pact of the Blade feature (*PH*, 107–8) lets you create a melee weapon out of nothing. Whenever you do so, you determine the weapon's form, choosing from the melee weapon options in the Weapons table in the *Player's Handbook* (p. 149). For example, you can create a greataxe, and then use the feature again to create a javelin, which causes the greataxe to disappear.

You can also use Pact of the Blade to bond with a magic weapon, turning it into your pact weapon. This magic weapon doesn't have to be a melee weapon, so you could use the feature on a *+1 longbow*, for instance. Once the bond is formed, the magic weapon appears whenever you call your pact weapon to you, and the intent is that you can't change the magic weapon's form when it appears. For example, if you bond with a *flame tongue* (longsword) and send the weapon to the feature's extradimensional space, the weapon comes back as a longsword when you summon it. You don't get to turn it into a club. Similarly, if you bond with a *dagger of venom*, you can't summon it as a maul; it's always a dagger.

The feature initially allows the conjuring forth of a melee weapon, yet we allow more versatility when it comes to magic weapons. We didn't want a narrow focus in this feature to make a warlock unhappy when a variety of magic weapons appear in a campaign. Does this versatility extend outside the melee theme of the feature? It sure does, but we're willing to occasionally bend a design concept if doing so is likely to increase a player's happiness.

Does the warlock's Awakened Mind feature allow two-way telepathic communication? The feature is intended to provide one-way communication. The warlock can use the feature to speak telepathically to a creature, but the feature doesn't give that creature the ability to telepathically reply. In contrast, the telepathy ability that some monsters have (*MM*, 9) does make two-way communication possible.

Does using a bonus action break invisibility from a warlock's One with Shadows invocation? Taking a bonus action breaks the invisibility of a warlock's One with Shadows. A bonus action is an action.

WIZARD

Does the wizard's Potent Cantrip feature apply to cantrips with attack rolls or only to saves? Potent Cantrip affects only cantrips that require a saving throw, such as *acid splash* and *poison spray*.

Is an abjurer's Arcane Ward healed only when the ward has 0 hit points? The ward regains hit points whenever the abjurer casts an abjuration spell of 1st level or higher, not just when the ward has 0 hit points.

Does casting alarm as a ritual heal Arcane Ward? Any abjuration spell of 1st level or higher cast by an abjurer can restore hit points to his or her Arcane Ward. As is normal for healing, the ward can't regain more hit points than its hit point maximum: twice the wizard's level + the wizard's Intelligence modifier.

How does Arcane Ward interact with temporary hit points and damage resistance that an abjurer might have? An Arcane Ward is not an extension of the wizard who creates it. It is a magical effect with its own hit points. Any temporary hit points, immunities, or resistances that the wizard has don't apply to the ward.

The ward takes damage first. Any leftover damage is taken by the wizard and goes through the following game elements in order: (1) any relevant damage immunity, (2) any relevant damage resistance, (3) any temporary hit points, and (4) real hit points.

An abjurer gains resistance to spell damage at 14th level. Does the abjurer's Arcane Ward gain this resistance when a spell hits the abjurer? The abjurer, not the Arcane Ward, gains the resistance at 14th level.

Does the 14th-level Illusionist ability let you make something real every round, or just once? Illusory Reality is intended to make one illusory object real per illusion spell.

EQUIPMENT

Does heavy armor reduce Dexterity saving throws or ability checks other than Stealth? If you have proficiency with it, heavy armor doesn't affect Dexterity saving throws or ability checks, other than Stealth.

If you attack with a shield—most likely as an improvised weapon—do you keep the +2 bonus to AC? Attacking with a shield doesn't deprive you of the bonus to AC.

BACKGROUNDS

Can you have more than one background? You can have only one background. It represents key aspects of your life before you embarked on a life of adventure. If none of the backgrounds available matches your character concept, talk with your DM and use the guidelines on page 125 of the *Player's Handbook* to customize your own background.

MULTICLASSING

Are ability score improvements class-level dependent, rather than total level? Ability score improvements are

based on your level in a particular class, not your total level if you multiclass. Your class table tells you when you get the improvement.

Would a temporary stat bump fulfill a multiclass prerequisite, or does the base score have to meet the requirement? The intent is that your base score, not a temporary score, has to meet a multiclassing prerequisite.

When multiclassing, do you get the cantrips from all your classes? If any of your classes grants you cantrips, you get all of them.

Do you gain proficiency in more saving throws when multiclassing? A class offers various starting proficiencies that you get if it is your first class. If the class isn't your first, you get only the starting proficiencies listed for that class in the Multiclassing Proficiencies table (*PH*, 164). No saving throw proficiencies are included in that table.

Regardless of whether a class is your first, you do gain any proficiencies that the class grants through its features. For instance, if you gain a level in cleric and choose the War Domain, you do benefit from the Bonus Proficiencies feature, even if cleric isn't your first class.

Can a barbarian/cleric use spiritual weapon ***to attack while raging, if it is cast before entering Rage?*** A barbarian's Rage makes concentration impossible but has no effect on spells, like *spiritual weapon*, that don't require concentration.

Can a barbarian/fighter (Battle Master) use maneuvers while raging? Nothing in the barbarian's Rage feature precludes the use of maneuvers.

Can a rogue/monk use Sneak Attack with unarmed strikes? The Sneak Attack feature works with a weapon that has the finesse or ranged property. An unarmed strike isn't a weapon, so it doesn't qualify. In contrast, a rogue/monk can use Sneak Attack with a monk weapon, such as a shortsword or a dagger, that has one of the required properties.

A wizard multiclasses into Wild Magic sorcerer. Do spells cast from their spellbook trigger Wild Magic Surge if they are on the sorcerer spell list or do they have to gain them from Sorcerer to trigger? From the multiclassing rules: "Each spell you know and prepare is associated with one of your classes" (*PH*, 164). This rule means only the spells gained from levels in sorcerer trigger Wild Magic Surge.

FEATS

CROSSBOW EXPERT

Is it intentional that the second benefit of Crossbow Expert helps ranged spell attacks? Yes, it's intentional. When you make a ranged attack roll within 5 feet of an enemy, you normally suffer disadvantage (*PH*, 195). The second benefit of Crossbow Expert prevents you from suffering that disadvantage, whether or not the ranged attack is with a crossbow.

When designing a feat with a narrow use, we consider adding at least one element that can benefit a character more broadly—a bit of mastery that your character brings from one situation to another. The second benefit of Crossbow Expert is such an element, as is the first benefit of Great Weapon Master. That element in Crossbow Expert shows that some of the character's expertise with one type of thing—crossbows, in this case—transfers to other things.

Do the first and third benefits of Crossbow Expert turn a hand crossbow into a semiautomatic weapon? The short answer is no.

The first benefit of the feat lets you ignore the loading property (*PH*, 147) of the hand crossbow if you're proficient with that weapon. The upshot is that you can fire it more than once if you have a feature like Extra Attack. You're still limited, however, by the fact that the weapon has the ammunition property (*PH*, 146). The latter property requires you to have a bolt to fire from the hand crossbow, and the hand crossbow isn't going to load itself (unless it's magical or a gnomish invention). You need to load each bolt into the weapon, and doing so requires a hand.

To dig deeper into this point, take a look at the following sentence in the definition of the ammunition property: "Drawing the ammunition from a quiver, case, or other container is part of the attack." The sentence tells us two important things. First, you're assumed to be drawing—that is, extracting with your hand—the ammunition from a container. Second, the act of drawing the ammunition is included in the attack and therefore doesn't require its own action and doesn't use up your free interaction with an object on your turn.

What does that all mean for a hand crossbow? It means Crossbow Expert makes it possible to fire a hand crossbow more than once with a feature like Extra Attack, provided that you have enough ammunition and you have a hand free to load it for each shot.

Does Crossbow Expert let you fire a hand crossbow and then fire it again as a bonus action? It does! Take a look at the feat's third benefit. It says you can attack with a hand crossbow as a bonus action when you use the Attack action to attack with a one-handed weapon. A hand crossbow is a one-handed weapon, so it can, indeed, be used for both attacks, assuming you have a hand free to load the hand crossbow between the two attacks.

ELEMENTAL ADEPT

Is Elemental Adept the only feat you can take more than once? Elemental Adept is the only feat in the Player's Handbook that you can take more than once.

LUCKY

How does the Lucky feat interact with advantage and disadvantage? The Lucky feat lets you spend a luck point; roll an extra d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw; and then choose which d20 to use. This is true no matter how many d20s are in the mix. For example, if you have disadvantage on your attack roll, you could spend a luck point, roll a third d20, and then decide which of the three dice to use. You still have disadvantage, since the feat doesn't say it gets rid of it, but you do get to pick the die.

The Lucky feat is a great example of an exception to a general rule. The general rule I have in mind is the one that tells us how advantage and disadvantage work (*PH*, 173). The specific rule is the Lucky feat, and we know that a specific rule trumps a general rule if they conflict with each other (*PH*, 7).

Magic Initiate

If you're a spellcaster, can you pick your own class when you gain the Magic Initiate feat? Yes, the feat doesn't say you can't. For example, if you're a wizard and gain the Magic Initiate feat, you can choose wizard and thereby learn two more wizard cantrips and another 1st-level wizard spell.

If you have spell slots, can you use them to cast the 1st-level spell you learn with the Magic Initiate feat? Yes, but only if the class you pick for the feat is one of your classes. For example, if you pick sorcerer and you are a sorcerer, the Spellcasting feature for that class tells you that you can use your spell slots to cast the sorcerer spells you know, so you can use your spell slots to cast the 1st-level sorcerer spell you learn from Magic Initiate. Similarly, if you are a wizard and pick that class for the feat, you learn a 1st-level wizard spell, which you could add to your spellbook and subsequently prepare.

In short, you must follow your character's normal spellcasting rules, which determine whether you can expend spell slots on the 1st-level spell you learn from Magic Initiate.

Polearm Master

Can I add my Strength modifier to the damage of the bonus attack that Polearm Master gives me? Yep! If you have the feat and use the Attack action to attack with a glaive, halberd, or quarterstaff, you can also strike with the weapon's opposite end as a bonus action. For that bonus attack, you add your ability modifier to the attack roll, as you do whenever you attack with that weapon, and if you hit, you add the same ability modifier to the damage roll, which is normal for weapon damage rolls (*PH*, 196).

A specific rule, such as the rule for two-weapon fighting (*PH*, 195), might break the general rule by telling you not to add your ability modifier to the damage. Polearm Master doesn't do that.

Savage Attacker

Does the Savage Attacker feat work with unarmed strikes? No. Savage Attacker relies on a weapon's damage dice, and an unarmed strike isn't a weapon (a point that was clarified in the *Player's Handbook* errata).

Sentinel

Does the attack granted by the third benefit of the Sentinel feat take place before or after the triggering attack? The bonus attack takes place after the triggering attack. Here's why: the feat doesn't specify the bonus attack's timing, and when a reaction has no timing specified, the reaction occurs after its trigger finishes (*DMG*, 252). In contrast, an opportunity attack specifically takes place before its trigger finishes—that is, right before the target creature leaves your reach (*PH*, 195).

Tough

Class features and feats sometimes affect a shapechanged druid. Does the Tough feat have an effect while shifting? The intent is no. The Tough feat affects a druid's hit points, which are replaced by the beast's hit points while using Wild Shape.

Ability Checks

Are attack rolls and saving throws basically specialized ability checks? They aren't. It's easy to mistake the three rolls as three faces of the same thing, because they each involve rolling a d20, adding any modifiers, and comparing the total to a Difficulty Class, and they're all subject to advantage and disadvantage. In short, they share the same procedure for determining success or failure.

Despite this common procedure, the three rolls are separate from each other. If something in the game, like the *guidance* spell, affects one of them, the other two aren't affected unless the rules specifically say so. The next few questions touch on this point again.

Can you get a critical on an ability check? For example, on a grapple attempt, does a critical win, or the highest number? Ability checks don't score critical hits. Attack rolls do.

Is a 1 on an ability check an automatic failure? Rolling a 1 on an ability check or a saving throw is not an automatic failure. A 1 is an automatic miss for an attack.

If you cast the hex spell and choose Strength as the affected ability, does the target also have disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws that use Strength? No, the *hex* spell's description says it affects ability checks that use the chosen ability. The description says nothing about affecting attack rolls or saving throws. This means, for example, that if you choose Constitution, the spell's target doesn't suffer disadvantage when trying to maintain concentration on a spell, since concentration requires a Constitution saving throw, not a Constitution check.

Curious about the spell's intent? The spell is meant to be a classic jinx—the sort seen in folklore—that is useful in and out of combat. In combat, the spell provides some extra necrotic damage. Outside combat, you could foil a cunning diplomat, for example, by casting the spell and imposing disadvantage on his or her Charisma checks.

Does the bard's Jack of All Trades feature apply to attack rolls and saving throws that don't use the bard's proficiency bonus? Nope. The feature benefits only ability checks. Don't forget that initiative rolls are Dexterity checks, so Jack of All Trades can benefit a bard's initiative, assuming the bard isn't already adding his or her proficiency bonus to it.

When you make a Strength (Athletics) check to grapple or shove someone, are you making an attack roll? Again, the answer is no. That check is an ability check, so game effects tied to attack rolls don't apply to it. Going back to an earlier question, the *hex* spell could be used to diminish a grappler's effectiveness. And if the grappler's target is under the effect of the Dodge action, that action doesn't inhibit the grapple, since Dodge doesn't affect ability checks.

Adventuring

Are extradimensional spaces, such as a demiplane or the space created by rope trick, considered to be on a different plane of existence? An extradimensional space (aka an extraplanar space) is outside other planes. Therefore, if you're on the Material Plane and your foe is in an extradimensional space, the two of you aren't considered to be on the same plane of existence.

What's an example of an effect that can reduce exhaustion? The *greater restoration* spell can reduce exhaustion.

Is there an intended way to get lost Intelligence back, such as after an intellect devourer zeroes it? The greater restoration spell can remove the reduction to an ability score.

Combat

Does surprise happen outside the initiative order as a special surprise round? No, here's how surprise works.

The first step of any combat is this: the DM determines whether anyone in the combat is surprised (reread "Combat Step by Step" on page 189 of the *Player's Handbook*). This determination happens only once during a fight and only at the beginning. In other words, once a fight starts, you can't be surprised again, although a hidden foe can still gain the normal benefits from being unseen (see "Unseen Attackers and Targets" on page 194 of the *Player's Handbook*).

To be surprised, you must be caught off guard, usually because you failed to notice foes being stealthy or you were startled by an enemy with a special ability, such as the gelatinous cube's Transparent trait, that makes it exceptionally surprising. You can be surprised even if your companions aren't, and you aren't surprised if even one of your foes fails to catch you unawares.

If anyone is surprised, no actions are taken yet. First, initiative is rolled as normal. Then, the first round of combat starts, and the unsurprised combatants act in initiative order. A surprised creature can't move or take an action or a reaction until its first turn ends (remember that being unable to take an action also means you can't take a bonus action). In effect, a surprised creature skips its first turn in a fight. Once that turn ends, the creature is no longer surprised.

In short, activity in a combat is always ordered by initiative, whether or not someone is surprised, and after the first found of combat has passed, surprise is no longer a factor. You can still try to hide from your foes and gain the benefits conferred by being hidden, but you don't deprive your foes of their turns when you do so.

If a wizard casts a spell like fireball ***during a surprise round, do the enemies get disadvantage on their saving throw?*** Being surprised has no effect on saves. If you're surprised, you can't move or take an action on your first turn of the combat and you can't take a reaction until that turn ends (*PH*, 189).

Can you delay your turn and take it later in the round? Nope. When it's your turn, either you do something or you don't. If you don't want to do anything, consider taking the Dodge action so that you'll, at least, have some extra protection. If you want to wait to act in response to something, take the Ready action, which lets you take part of your turn later.

For a variety of reasons, we didn't include the option to delay your turn:

- Your turn involves several decisions, including where to move and what action to take. If you could delay your turn, your decision-making would possibly become slower, since you would have to consider whether you wanted to take your turn at all. Multiply that extra analysis by the number of characters and monsters in a combat, and you have the potential for many slow-downs in play.
- The ability to delay your turn can make initiative meaningless, as characters and monsters bounce around in the initiative order. If combatants can change their place in the initiative order at will, why use initiative at all? On top of that, changing initiative can easily turn into an unwelcome chore, especially for the DM, who might have to change the initiative list over and over during a fight.
- Being able to delay your turn can let you wreak havoc on the durations of spells and other effects, particularly any of them that last until your next turn. Simply by changing when your turn happens, you could change the length of certain spells. The way to guard against such abuse would be to create a set of additional rules that would limit your ability to change durations. The net effect? More complexity would be added to the game, and with more complexity, there is greater potential for slower play.

Two of our goals for combat were for it to be speedy and for initiative to matter. We didn't want to start every combat by rolling initiative and then undermine turn order with a delay option. Moreover, we felt that toying with initiative wasn't where the focus should be in battle. Instead, the dramatic actions of the combatants should be the focus, with turns that could happen as quickly as possible. Plus, the faster your turn ends, the sooner you get to take your next turn.

I have a readied action. Can I stop readying to take an opportunity attack? Or is ready a full turn commitment? If you have an action readied, you can make an opportunity attack, which causes you to stop readying.

Can a bonus action be used as an action or vice versa? For example, can a bard use a bonus action to grant a Bardic Inspiration die and an action to cast healing word? No. Actions and bonus actions aren't interchangeable. In the example, the bard could use Bardic Inspiration or *healing word* on a turn, not both.

Can a flying creature without the hover trait stay in one place while airborne, or does it need to move each round? A flyer that lacks the hover trait can stay aloft without moving each round.

Can you move through a prone enemy? The prone condition doesn't override the rule that prevents you from moving through an enemy's space, unless that enemy is at least two sizes larger or smaller than you. If you do move through another creature's space—whether a friend or an enemy—the space is difficult terrain for you, and you can't willingly end your move there. See the *Player's Handbook*, page 190–92, for more on movement in combat.

Does travel pace apply to movement in combat, or just when traveling? The travel pace rule (*PH*, 181–2) doesn't apply in combat.

If you have a feature like Cunning Action or Step of the Wind, can you take the Dash action more than once on your turn? If a bonus action lets you take the Dash action, nothing in the rules prevents you from taking the Dash action with your regular action too. The same principle holds when you use a feature like Action Surge; you could use both of your actions to take the Dash action.

If you use the Help action to distract a foe, do you have to stay within 5 feet of it for the action to work? No, you can take the action and then move away. The action itself is what grants advantage to your ally, not you staying next to the foe.

Can you use the Ready action to take the Dash action on someone else's turn and then combine the Charger feat with it? No, since you can't take a bonus action on someone else's turn.

For readying a spell or other action, does the target have to be in range? Your target must be within range when you take a readied action, not when you first ready it.

How does readying a spell work? Do you lose your spell slot if the trigger never occurs? A readied spell's slot is lost if you don't release the spell with your reaction before the start of your next turn.

How do I know which ability modifier to use with an attack roll and its damage roll? The *Player's Handbook* specifies which ability modifier to use with an attack roll (p. 194) and which one to use with the corresponding damage roll (p. 196). Here's a summary:

Attack Type	Attack Roll	Damage Roll
Melee weapon attack	Strength mod.*	Strength mod.
Ranged weapon attack	Dexterity mod.*	Dexterity mod.
Spell attack	Spellcasting ability mod.**	Depends on effect

*Add your proficiency bonus if you're using a weapon with which you're proficient.

**Add your proficiency bonus. Your spellcasting ability is determined by your class or whatever feature gave you the ability to make the spell attack.

For example, if you make a melee weapon attack with a longsword, you add your Strength modifier to the attack and damage rolls of the attack. In contrast, if you make the spell attack of the *fire bolt* cantrip, you add your spellcasting ability modifier to the attack roll. If you're a wizard, Intelligence is your spellcasting ability, so add your Intelligence modifier. *Fire bolt* doesn't tell you to add your modifier to its damage roll, though, so you don't.

Various features in the game make explicit exceptions to the rule. For example, a weapon that has the finesse property lets you choose whether to use your Strength or Dexterity modifier with it. Another example: when you use the two-weapon fighting option in the *Player's Handbook* (p. 195), you don't add your ability modifier to the damage of the bonus attack, unless that modifier is negative. You do, however, still add your ability modifier to the attack roll, since the option doesn't tell you not to. In other words, you follow the general rule until an exception in the game tells you not to.

What about unusual cases like the *green-flame blade* spell? The spell, which appears in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*, tells you to make a melee attack with a weapon. Look at the table above, and you see that, under normal circumstances, you use your Strength modifier when you make a melee weapon attack. It doesn't matter that a spell told you to attack. If a spell expects you to make a spell attack, the spell's description says so. For examples, take a look at *fire bolt* and *ray of frost*. Both say it—"spell attack."

What does "melee weapon attack" mean: a melee attack with a weapon or an attack with a melee weapon? It means a melee attack with a weapon. Similarly, "ranged weapon attack" means a ranged attack with a weapon. Some attacks count as a melee or ranged weapon attack even if a weapon isn't involved, as specified in the text of those attacks. For example, an unarmed strike counts as a melee weapon attack, even though the attacker's body isn't considered a weapon.

Here's a bit of wording minutia: we would write "melee-weapon attack" if we meant an attack with a melee weapon.

How does a reach weapon work with opportunity attacks? An opportunity attack is normally triggered when a creature you can see moves beyond your reach (*PH*, 195). If you want to make an opportunity attack with a reach weapon, such as a glaive or a halberd, you can do so when a creature leaves the reach you have with that weapon. For example, if you're wielding a halberd, a creature that is right next to you could move 5 feet away without triggering an opportunity attack. If that creature tries to move an additional 5 feet—beyond your 10-foot reach—the creature then triggers an opportunity attack.

Can a blinded creature make an opportunity attack? An opportunity attack is triggered by "a hostile creature you can see" (*PH*, 195). If you can't see an enemy, you can't make an opportunity attack against it.

Can an opportunity attack be used to make a grapple or a shove? Grappling/shoving are part of the Attack action (*PH*, 195), not an opportunity attack. Take the Ready action to grapple/shove outside your turn.

When you use two-weapon fighting, can you draw and throw two weapons on your turn? You can throw two weapons with two-weapon fighting (*PH*, 195), but that rule doesn't give you the ability to draw two weapons for free.

On your turn, you can interact with one object for free, either during your move or during an action (*PH*, 190). One of the most common object interactions is drawing or stowing a weapon. Interacting with a second object on the same turn requires an action. You need a feature like the Dual Wielder feat to draw or stow a second weapon for free.

Is the grappling rule in the Player's Handbook usable by a handless creature? The grappling rule (*PH*, 195) was written for a grappler with at least one hand, but a DM can easily adapt the rule for a handless creature that has a bite or an appendage, such as a tentacle, that could reasonably seize someone. A wolf, for example, could plausibly try to seize a person with its bite, and the animal wouldn't be able to use its bite attack as long as it held onto the person.

Keep in mind that the grappling rule in the *Player's Handbook* requires the Attack action, so a creature must take that action—rather than Multiattack or another action in the creature's stat block—when it uses that rule. A monster, such as a roper, that has a special grappling attack doesn't follow that rule when using its special attack.

Does a grapple or a shove trigger the Tempest cleric's Wrath of the Storm or a Battle Master's Riposte? The answer to both questions is no. The grappling and shoving options (*PH*, 195) don't result in a hit or a miss.

Target at range caught in melee combat—does that target get some kind of cover or do I get disadvantage? Your

target has half-cover if another creature is between you and the target (*PH*, 196).

Can damage be reduced to 0 by resistance or another form of damage reduction? There is no damage minimum in the rules, so it is possible to deal 0 damage with an attack, a spell, or another effect.

Is the intent that only melee weapon attacks can knock foes unconscious, or can melee spell attacks as well? If you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack, you can knock the creature out (*PH*, 198). That melee attack isn't restricted to weapons. Even a melee spell attack can be used to knock a creature out.

Are attacks with a net always made with disadvantage? Unless you have a special ability that says otherwise, any net attack has disadvantage because you're either within 5 feet of your target (see *PH*, 149) or you're attacking at long range, which is between 5 and 15 feet for a net.

Spellcasting

Can a spellcaster cast spells off-target to minimize damage to party members from a spell like *shatter*? The spellcaster chooses where to place the point of origin of a spell like *shatter* and may, therefore, choose a position that is advantageous to allies.

Can permanent magical effects be dispelled? Or are they no longer considered magical effects once permanent? If the effect of a spell becomes permanent, it can be dispelled, unless its description says otherwise.

Do spellcasters have to learn a ritual version of a spell apart from the normal version, or are they the same? To cast the ritual version of a spell you know, you need a feature, such as Ritual Casting, that gives you the ability to cast the spell as a ritual. You don't need to also learn a special version of the spell.

Spell Attacks

Is a touch range spell considered a melee attack for purposes of subduing foes rather than killing? Having a range of touch doesn't mean a spell is a melee attack. A spell tells you if it delivers such an attack.

Can spell attacks score critical hits? A spell attack can definitely score a critical hit. The rule on critical hits applies to attack rolls of any sort.

Can a spell with an attack roll be used as the attack in the Attack action or as part of the Extra Attack feature? The short answer is no.

As explained in the *Player's Handbook*, you can take one action on your turn in combat, in addition to moving. You choose your action from the options available to everyone—options such as Attack, Cast a Spell, and Dash—or you choose from among the special actions you've gained from a class, a feat, or another source.

If you want to cast a spell on your turn, you take the Cast a Spell action. Doing so means you're not taking the Attack action or any other action. It is true that a number of spells, such as *fire bolt* and *ray of frost*, involve making an attack, but you can't make such an attack without first casting the spell that delivers it. In other words, just because something involves an attack doesn't mean the Attack action is being used.

By extension, the Extra Attack feature (given by several classes, including the fighter and paladin) doesn't let you cast extra attack spells. That feature specifically relies on the Attack action, not the Cast a Spell action or any other action.

In summary, to make a spell attack, you have to first cast a spell or use a feature that creates the spell's effect. A game feature, such as Extra Attack, that lets you make an attack doesn't let you cast a spell unless it says it does.

Can you use a melee spell attack to make an opportunity attack? You can't if the spell attack is created by casting a spell. When a creature triggers an opportunity attack from you, you can use your reaction to make a melee attack against it. The opportunity attack doesn't suddenly give you the ability to cast a spell, such as *shocking grasp*.

Each spell has a casting time. A game feature, such as an opportunity attack, doesn't let you bypass that casting time, unless the feature says otherwise. The War Caster feat is an example of a feature that does let you bypass a 1-action casting time to cast a spell in place of an opportunity attack.

A few monsters can make opportunity attacks with melee spell attacks. Here's how: certain monsters—including the banshee, lich, and specter—have a melee spell attack that isn't delivered by a spell. For example, the banshee's Corrupting Touch action is a melee spell attack but no spell is cast to make it. The banshee can, therefore, make opportunity attacks with Corrupting Touch.

Some spells (like eldritch blast*) target a creature. Some others (like* fire bolt*) target objects too. Does this mean that I can't attack the door with* eldritch blast*?** The target specifications (creature, object, or something else) in spells are intentional.

Does a "melee spell attack" count as a "melee attack" for Touch of Death? A melee spell attack is, indeed, a melee attack and can qualify for the Death cleric's Touch of Death feature.

Spell Level

What level is a spell if you cast it without a spell slot? Such a spell is cast at its lowest possible level, which is the level that appears near the top of its description. Unless you have a special ability that says otherwise, the only way to increase the level of a spell is to expend a higher-level spell slot when you cast it.

Here are some examples:

- The warlock's Chains of Carceri feature lets a warlock cast *hold monster* without a spell slot. That casting of *hold monster* is, therefore, 5th level, which is the lowest possible level for that spell.
- The warlock's Thief of Five Fates feature lets a warlock cast *bane* with a spell slot, which means the spell is 1st level or higher, depending on the slot that the warlock expends to cast it.
- The monk's Disciple of the Elements feature lets the monk spend ki points, rather than a spell slot, to increase the level of a spell.

This rule is true for player characters and monsters alike, which is why the innate spellcasters in the *Monster Manual* must cast an innate spell at its lowest possible level.

CANTRIPS

If a character has levels in more than one class, do the character's cantrips scale with character level or with the level in a spellcasting class? Cantrips scale with character level. For example, a barbarian 2 / cleric 3 casts *sacred flame* as a 5th-level character.

CASTING TIME

Is there a limit on the number of spells you can cast on your turn? There's no rule that says you can cast only X number of spells on your turn, but there are some practical limits. The main limiting factor is your action. Most spells require an action to cast, and unless you use a feature like the fighter's Action Surge, you have only one action on your turn.

If you cast a spell, such as *healing word*, with a bonus action, you can cast another spell with your action, but that other spell must be a cantrip. Keep in mind that this particular limit is specific to spells that use a bonus action. For instance, if you cast a second spell using Action Surge, you aren't limited to casting a cantrip with it.

Does the rule on casting a bonus action spell apply when you take a bonus action granted by a spell? The rule on casting a spell as a bonus action (see *PH*, 202) applies only on the turn you cast the spell. For example, *spiritual weapon* can be cast as a bonus action, and it lasts for 1 minute. On the turn you cast it, you can't cast another spell before or after it, unless that spell is a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action. Until *spiritual weapon* ends, it gives you the option of controlling its spectral weapon as a bonus action. That bonus action does not involve casting a spell, despite the fact that it's granted by a spell, so you can control the weapon and cast whatever spell you like on the same turn.

Can you also cast a reaction spell on your turn? You sure can! Here's a common way for it to happen: Cornelius the wizard is casting *fireball* on his turn, and his foe casts *counterspell* on him. Cornelius has *counterspell* prepared, so he uses his reaction to cast it and break his foe's *counterspell* before it can stop *fireball*.

If a spell has a longer casting time, do you have to complete its time requirement in order to successfully cast the spell? See the "Longer Casting Times" section of the *Player's Handbook* (p. 202) for how such casting times work.

Does casting a spell as a ritual require concentration if the spell doesn't normally require it? Concentration is required when casting any spell, including a ritual version, for longer than 1 action (see *PH*, 202). Once the casting is complete, the spell requires concentration only if its duration entry says it does.

COMPONENTS

Does a spell consume its material components? A spell doesn't consume its material components unless its description says it does. For example, the pearl required by the *identify* spell isn't consumed, whereas the diamond required by *raise dead* is used up when you cast the spell.

If a spell's material components are consumed, can a spellcasting focus still be used in place of the consumed component? Nope. A spellcasting focus can be used in place of a material component only if that component has no cost noted in the spell's description and if that component isn't consumed.

What's the amount of interaction needed to use a spellcasting focus? Does it have to be included in the somatic component? If a spell has a material component, you need to handle that component when you cast the spell (*PH*, 203). The same rule applies if you're using a spellcasting focus as the material component.

If a spell has a somatic component, you can use the hand that performs the somatic component to also handle the material component. For example, a wizard who uses an orb as a spellcasting focus could hold a quarterstaff in one hand and the orb in the other, and he could cast *lightning bolt* by using the orb as the spell's material component and the orb hand to perform the spell's somatic component.

Another example: a cleric's holy symbol is emblazoned on her shield. She likes to wade into melee combat with a mace in one hand and a shield in the other. She uses the holy symbol as her spellcasting focus, so she needs to have the shield in hand when she casts a cleric spell that has a material component. If the spell, such as *aid*, also has a somatic component, she can perform that component with the shield hand and keep holding the mace in the other.

If the same cleric casts *cure wounds*, she needs to put the mace or the shield away, because that spell doesn't have a material component but does have a somatic component. She's going to need a free hand to make the spell's gestures. If she had the War Caster feat, she could ignore this restriction.

DURATION

If you're concentrating on a spell, do you need to maintain line of sight with the spell's target or the spell's effect? You don't need to be within line of sight or within range to maintain concentration on a spell, unless a spell's description or other game feature says otherwise.

If I have 10 temporary hit points and I take 30 damage from an attack while concentrating on a spell, what is the DC of the Constitution save to maintain my concentration? The DC is 15 in that case. When temporary hit points absorb damage for you, you're still taking damage, just not to your real hit points.

In contrast, a feature like the wizard's Arcane Ward can take damage for you, potentially eliminating the need to make a Constitution saving throw or, at least, lowering the DC of that save.

Can a spellcaster dismiss a spell after casting it? You can't normally dismiss a spell that you cast unless (a) its description says you can or (b) it requires concentration and you decide to end your concentration on it. Otherwise, a spell's magic is unleashed on the environment, and if you want to end it, you need to cast *dispel magic* on it.

SPECIFIC SPELLS

Can you extend the duration of *armor of Agathys* by gaining more temporary hit points? The spell is meant to work only as long as you have the temporary hit points that the spell grants. When those temporary hit points are gone, the spell is done.

Keep in mind that temporary hit points aren't cumulative (see *PH*, 198). If you have temporary hit points and receive more of them, you don't add them together, unless a game feature says you can. You decide which temporary hit points

to keep. As an example, let's say you're a warlock with the Dark One's Blessing feature, which gives you temporary hit points when you reduce a creature to 0 hit points. You currently have 2 temporary hit points from *armor of Agathys*, you just slew a monster, and your Dark One's Blessing can now give you 4 temporary hit points. If you take those temporary hit points, they replace the ones from *armor of Agathys* and end that spell, so you might not want to take them and keep the spell going.

How does* barkskin *work with shields, cover, and other modifiers to AC? *Barkskin* specifies that your AC can't be lower than 16 while you are affected by the spell. This means you effectively ignore any modifiers to your AC—including your Dexterity modifier, your armor, a shield, and cover—unless your AC is higher than 16. For example, if your AC is normally 14, it's 16 while *barkskin* is on you. If your AC is 15 and you have half cover, your AC is 17; *barkskin* isn't relevant in this case.

When you cast a spell like* conjure woodland beings, *does the spellcaster or the DM choose the creatures that are conjured? A number of spells in the game let you summon creatures. *Conjure animals*, *conjure celestial*, *conjure minor elementals*, and *conjure woodland beings* are just a few examples.

Some spells of this sort specify that the spellcaster chooses the creature conjured. For example, *find familiar* gives the caster a list of animals to choose from.

Other spells of this sort let the spellcaster choose from among several broad options. For example, *conjure minor elementals* offers four options. Here are the first two:

- One elemental of challenge rating 2 or lower
- Two elementals of challenge rating 1 or lower

The design intent for options like these is that the spellcaster chooses one of them, and then the DM decides what creatures appear that fit the chosen option. For example, if you pick the second option, the DM chooses the two elementals that have a challenge rating of 1 or lower.

A spellcaster can certainly express a preference for what creatures shows up, but it's up to the DM to determine if they do. The DM will often choose creatures that are appropriate for the campaign and that will be fun to introduce in a scene.

Do* contagion *effects kick in immediately, or do they kick in when the target fails the three saving throws? The effects of the *contagion* spell's disease are meant to activate after three failed saving throws.

Can you cast* darkness *with a higher level slot to end a spell of 3rd level or higher that creates light? No. The *darkness* spell can dispel only a light-creating spell of 2nd level or lower, no matter what spell slot is used for *darkness*. Similarly, the *daylight* spell can dispel only a darkness-creating spell of 3rd level or lower, regardless of the spell slot used.

If the damage from* disintegrate *reduces a half-orc to 0 hit points, can Relentless Endurance prevent the orc from turning to ash? If *disintegrate* reduces you to 0 hit points, you're killed outright, as you turn to dust. If you're a half-orc, Relentless Endurance can't save you.

What happens if a druid using Wild Shape is reduced to 0 hit points by* disintegrate? *Does the druid simply leave beast form? The druid turns to dust, since the spell disintegrates you the instant you drop to 0 hit points.

Can you use* dispel magic *to dispel a magical effect like a vampire's Charm ability? *Dispel magic* has a particular purpose: to break other spells. It has no effect on a vampire's Charm ability or any other magical effect that isn't a spell. It also does nothing to the properties of a magic item. It can, however, end a spell cast from a magic item or from another source. Spells—they're what *dispel magic* is about. For example, if you cast *dispel magic* on a *staff of power*, the spell fails to disrupt the staff's magical properties, but if the staff's wielder casts *hold monster* from the staff, *dispel magic* can end that spell if cast on the target of *hold monster*.

There are abilities and other spells that can end or suspend magical effects that aren't spells. For example, the *greater restoration* spell can end a charm effect of any sort on a target (such as a vampire's Charm or a dryad's Fey Charm), and a paladin's Aura of Devotion can prevent or suspend such an effect.

Three of the most versatile spells for ending certain magical effects are *lesser restoration*, *greater restoration*, and *remove curse*.

Can you use* dispel magic *on the creations of a spell like* animate dead *or affect those creations with* antimagic field? Whenever you wonder whether a spell's effects can be dispelled or suspended, you need to answer one question: is the spell's duration instantaneous? If the answer is yes, there is nothing to dispel or suspend. Here's why: the effects of an instantaneous spell are brought into being by magic, but the effects aren't sustained by magic (see *PH*, 203). The magic flares for a split second and then vanishes. For example, the instantaneous spell *animate dead* harnesses magical energy to turn a corpse or a pile of bones into an undead creature. That necromantic magic is present for an instant and is then gone. The resulting undead now exists without the magic's help. Casting *dispel magic* on the creature can't end its mockery of life, and the undead can wander into an *antimagic field* with no adverse effect.

Another example: *cure wounds* instantaneously restores hit points to a creature. Because the spell's duration is instantaneous, the restoration can't be later dispelled. And you don't suddenly lose hit points if you step into an *antimagic field*!

In contrast, a spell like *conjure woodland beings* has a non-instantaneous duration, which means its creations can be ended by *dispel magic* and they temporarily disappear within an *antimagic field*.

Can you ready* dispel magic *to stop another spell from taking effect? The easiest way to stop a spell is to cast *counterspell* on its caster while it's being cast. If successful, *counterspell* interrupts the other spell's casting, and that spell fails to take effect. *Counterspell* works against any spell, regardless of a spell's casting time or duration.

With the Ready action, *dispel magic* can be cast in response to another spell being cast, yet *dispel magic* can't substitute for *counterspell*. The main reason is that *dispel magic* removes a spell that is already on a target, whether that target is a creature, an object, or some other phenomenon. *Dispel magic* can't pre-dispel something. If a spell isn't already present on a target, *dispel magic* does nothing to that target. The best that a readied *dispel magic* can do

is dispel a spell immediately after it's been cast to prevent it from having any effect after the action used to cast it. For example, on your turn you could say something like this: "I ready *dispel magic*, and if the high priest casts a spell on anyone, I cast *dispel magic* on the target if the spell takes hold." If the high priest then cast *hold person* on your companion who fails the save against it, you could unleash your readied *dispel magic* and end *hold person*.

Can dispel magic end globe of invulnerability? Yes, *dispel magic* can dispel the barrier created by *globe of invulnerability*, but not anything inside the barrier.

Can a spell such as fireball go past its 20-foot radius if the point of origin is set in an enclosed space? The fire of the *fireball* spell can spread around corners, but it's limited by the spell's 20-foot radius.

If I'm a cleric/druid with the Disciple of Life feature, does the goodberry spell benefit from the feature? Yes. The Disciple of Life feature would make each berry restore 4 hit points, instead of 1, assuming you cast *goodberry* with a 1st-level spell slot.

Can you use green-flame blade and booming blade with Extra Attack, opportunity attacks, Sneak Attack, and other weapon attack options? Introduced in the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*, the *green-flame blade* and *booming blade* spells pose a number of questions, because they each do something unusual: require you to make a melee attack with a weapon as part of the spell's casting.

First, each of these spells involves a normal melee weapon attack, not a spell attack, so you use whatever ability modifier you normally use with the weapon. (A spell tells you if it includes a spell attack, and neither of these spells do.) For example, if you use a longsword with *green-flame blade*, you use your Strength modifier for the weapon's attack and damage rolls.

Second, neither *green-flame blade* nor *booming blade* works with Extra Attack or any other feature that requires the Attack action. Like other spells, these cantrips require the Cast a Spell action, not the Attack action, and they can't be used to make an opportunity attack, unless a special feature allows you to do so.

Third, these weapon attacks work with Sneak Attack if they fulfill the normal requirements for that feature. For example, if you have the Sneak Attack feature and cast *green-flame blade* with a finesse weapon, you can deal Sneak Attack damage to the target of the weapon attack if you have advantage on the attack roll and hit.

For the spell hail of thorns, does it last for the initial attack or as long as you maintain concentration? *Hail of thorns* lasts until you hit a creature with a ranged weapon attack or your concentration ends, whichever comes first.

Can the extra action granted by haste be used to activate a magic item? No. Activating a magic item isn't a function of the Use an Object action (*DMG*, 141).

Does the heroes' feast spell grant immunity to poison damage or just the poison condition? The *heroes' feast* spell grants immunity to poison in any form—damage and the condition.

Do the temporary hit points from heroism accumulate each round? These temporary hit points aren't cumulative. The spell would tell you if you were meant to add them together. At the start of each of your turns, the spell, effectively, refreshes the number of temporary hit points you have from it; if you lost some or all of the temporary hit points, the spell gives them back to you.

If dispel magic targets the magical effect from bless cast by a cleric, does it remove the effect on all the targets? *Dispel magic* ends a spell on one target. It doesn't end the same spell on other targets.

Does the extra damage from hex only apply if there is an attack roll? The extra damage in the *hex* spell requires an attack that hits.

Can you use a shield with mage armor? *Mage armor* works with a shield. Shields are grouped with armor in the equipment rules in the *Player's Handbook*, but various game features distinguish between the armor you wear and a shield you wield. Take a look at the monk's Unarmored Defense feature and compare it to the barbarian's version to see what I mean. In the monk's version, you must both forgo wearing armor and forgo wielding a shield if you want to benefit from the feature, whereas a barbarian must only forgo wearing armor.

Does Unarmored Defense work with a spell like mage armor? Unarmored Defense doesn't work with *mage armor*. You might be asking yourself, "Why don't they work together? *Mage armor* specifies that it works on a creature who isn't wearing armor." It's true that the target of *mage armor* must be unarmored, but mage armor gives you a new way to calculate your AC (13 + your Dexterity modifier) and is therefore incompatible with Unarmored Defense or any other feature that provides an AC calculation.

Can an object created with minor illusion move? For example, a wall sliding down a corridor? An illusory object created by a *minor illusion* doesn't move. Compare to spells like *mislead* that talk about moving.

Could minor illusion create a fog cloud? If so, would shooting an arrow through it cancel the illusion? An illusory object made by *minor illusion* is meant to be like a stool or a rock, not an atmospheric effect.

Does moonbeam deal damage when you cast it? What about when its effect moves onto a creature? The answer to both questions is no. Here's some elaboration on that answer.

Some spells and other game features create an area of effect that does something when a creature enters that area for the first time on a turn or when a creature starts its turn in that area. The turn you cast such a spell, you're primarily setting up hurt for your foes on later turns. *Moonbeam*, for example, creates a beam of light that can damage a creature who enters the beam or who starts its turn in the beam.

Here are some spells with the same timing as *moonbeam* for their areas of effect:

- *blade barrier*
- *cloudkill*
- *cloud of daggers*
- *Evard's black tentacles*
- *forbiddance*
- *moonbeam*
- *sleet storm*
- *spirit guardians*

Reading the description of any of those spells, you might wonder whether a creature is considered to be entering the spell's area of effect if the area is created on the creature's space. And if the area of effect can be moved—as the beam of *moonbeam* can—does moving it into a creature's space count as the creature entering the area? Our design intent for such spells is this: a creature enters the area of effect when the creature passes into it. Creating the area of effect on the creature or moving it onto the creature doesn't count. If the creature is still in the area at the start of its turn, it is subjected to the area's effect.

Entering such an area of effect needn't be voluntary, unless a spell says otherwise. You can, therefore, hurl a creature into the area with a spell like *thunderwave*. We consider that clever play, not an imbalance, so hurl away! Keep in mind, however, that a creature is subjected to such an area of effect only the first time it enters the area on a turn. You can't move a creature in and out of it to damage it over and over again on the same turn.

In summary, a spell like *moonbeam* affects a creature when the creature passes into the spell's area of effect and when the creature starts its turn there. You're essentially creating a hazard on the battlefield.

Does planar binding **summon the creature to be bound, or is that done separately?** *Planar binding* doesn't summon a creature. It attempts to bind a creature that is within the spell's range.

Can you concentrate on a spell while transformed by polymorph**?** You can't cast spells while you're transformed by *polymorph*, but nothing in the spell prevents you from concentrating on a spell that you cast before being transformed.

Does a friendly creature under the effects of poly-morph **have to take the mental stats of the new form?** Yes, that's the intent.

If I cast shillelagh **on my quarterstaff and have the Polearm Master feat, does the bonus attack use a d4 or a d8 for damage?** The bonus attack uses a d4. That attack is a function of the feat, not the weapon being used.

Monsters

Is natural armor considered light armor? No. Natural armor doesn't fit into the categories of light, medium, and heavy armor, and when you have it, it isn't considered to be an armor you're wearing.

Does natural armor cap a creature's Dexterity bonus? Natural armor doesn't limit a creature's Dexterity bonus.

A monster is immune to damage from nonmagical bludgeoning weapons. Does it still take damage from falling? Yes, that monster is still going to feel the hurt of a fall.

The Monster Manual **says gnolls speak Gnoll, but the** Player's Handbook **doesn't mention that language. What is correct?** The *Player's Handbook* language tables don't list every language in the D&D multiverse. The *Monster Manual* includes other languages, including Sahuagin and Gnoll.

Does a monster with at-will spellcasting ability mean it can cast a spell as an action or as a bonus action? If a

monster has the ability to cast a spell at will, that spell is cast using its normal casting time.

If a monster makes a melee attack that uses its Dexterity modifier, is it considered to have used a finesse weapon? A weapon doesn't have the finesse property unless its description says so, and using Dexterity for an attack doesn't confer the finesse property. If a weapon does have that property, you can use Strength or Dexterity with it.

Is the breath weapon of a dragon magical? If you cast *antimagic field*, don *armor of invulnerability*, or use another feature of the game that protects against magical or nonmagical effects, you might ask yourself, "Will this protect me against a dragon's breath?" The breath weapon of a typical dragon isn't considered magical, so *antimagic field* won't help you but *armor of invulnerability* will.

You might be thinking, "Dragons seem pretty magical to me." And yes, they are extraordinary! Their description even says they're magical. But our game makes a distinction between two types of magic:

- the background magic that is part of the D&D multiverse's physics and the physiology of many D&D creatures
- the concentrated magical energy that is contained in a magic item or channeled to create a spell or other focused magical effect

In D&D, the first type of magic is part of nature. It is no more dispellable than the wind. A monster like a dragon exists because of that magic-enhanced nature. The second type of magic is what the rules are concerned about. When a rule refers to something being magical, it's referring to that second type. Determining whether a game feature is magical is straightforward. Ask yourself these questions about the feature:

- Is it a magic item?
- Is it a spell? Or does it let you create the effects of a spell that's mentioned in its description?
- Is it a spell attack?
- Does its description say it's magical?

If your answer to any of those questions is yes, the feature is magical.

Let's look at a white dragon's Cold Breath and ask ourselves those questions. First, Cold Breath isn't a magic item. Second, its description mentions no spell. Third, it's not a spell attack. Fourth, the word "magical" appears nowhere in its description. Our conclusion: Cold Breath is not considered a magical game effect, even though we know that dragons are amazing, supernatural beings.

Does the movement from a dragon's Wing Attack legendary action draw attacks of opportunity if it moves out of reach? Nothing in Wing Attack protects the dragon from opportunity attacks.

Is a vampire affected by hold person **or** calm emotions**?** A vampire has the undead creature type, not the humanoid type, so it isn't affected by either of those spells.

How does a monster's Leadership ability work? Is it one time or 1/round for all allies' actions for 1 minute? A creature turns on Leadership as an action. Until the benefit ends, the creature can grant a die whenever a visible ally in range attacks/saves.

Magic Items

Can potions be administered to unconscious characters as an action? Yes, you can administer a potion to someone else as an action (*DMG*, 139).

If a potion doesn't duplicate a spell, does it require concentration? A potion's effect requires concentration only if its description says so or if it duplicates a spell that requires concentration.

Which is correct in the Dungeon Master's Guide, the rule for scrolls or the rule for a spell scroll? They're both correct. The rule for scrolls (p. 139) is for scrolls in general, including a *scroll of protection*, and it allows you to try to activate a spell if you're literate. The rule for a *spell scroll* is specific to that type of scroll and introduces an additional requirement: the spell on the scroll must be on your class's spell list for you to read the scroll.

A *spell scroll* can be named in a variety of ways: *spell scroll*, *scroll of X* (where *X* is the name of a spell), or *spell scroll* of *X* (where *X*, again, is the name of a spell). No matter how its name appears, a *spell scroll* follows the same rule.

For you to meet a *spell scroll*'s requirement, the spell on the scroll needs to be on whatever spell list is used by your class. Here are two examples. If you're a cleric, the spell must be on the cleric spell list, and if you're a fighter with the Eldritch Knight archetype, the spell must be on the wizard spell list, because that is the spell list used by your class.

Do the AC bonuses from a ring of protection and bracers of defense stack? Yes. In general, bonuses stack, unless they're from the same spell (see "Combining Magical Effects" in the *Player's Handbook*, p. 205). You also can't benefit from more than one *ring of protection*, for instance, since you can't attune to more than one copy of an item at a time.

Do magic weapons give you a bonus to attack and damage rolls? A magic weapon gives you a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls only if its description says it does. Every magic weapon can bypass resistances and immunities to damage from nonmagical attacks, but only certain magic weapons are more accurate and damaging than their nonmagical counterparts. For example, a *+1 longsword* and a *giant slayer* both give you a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls, whereas neither a *flame tongue* nor a *frost brand* provides such a bonus. All four weapons, however, can bypass an earth elemental's resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

In short, a bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls is considered a special property of a magic weapon, not something that all magic weapons provide automatically.

Are magic weapons with the thrown property (javelins and the like) assumed to return to their owner after being thrown? If a magic weapon returns to you after you throw it, its description says so, as in the *dwarven thrower* (*DMG*, 167).

Would an elf get a saving throw versus a philter of love as it's a charm? The description implies there is no save. There is no save against the *philter of love*. The love is just that strong.