

D&D 5E RULES CLARIFICATIONS
SAGE ADVISE COMPILATION
gathered by the Fanhalla Roleplaying Community
with reference material from "Morrus," "Zoltar" and "dungeondude"
Special homage to Wizards of the Coast and [EN world](#)

Gathered tweets and comments from Mearls & Crawford. Many of you likely remember the Sage Advice column in DRAGON Magazine, a tradition which lasted decades. Nowadays, both **Mike Mearls** and **Jeremy Crawford**, lead designers of D&D 5E, have been answering rules questions on Twitter and elsewhere--It's a big list, so here it comes....

Please note that the designer who posted each clarification simply tagged them with a J or an M. Also that most of this is from Twitter, thus the abbreviated language, etc.



Disclaimer. A careful investigation check (DC 8) reveals that this document is formatted to look similar to a themed version of the world's greatest roleplaying game; a fan flavored forgery if you will.

USEFUL LINKS

The following links may be useful to anyone playing D&D fifth edition.

<http://www.enworld.org/forum/content.php?1900-D-D-5th-Edition-Sage-Advice-from-Designers-Mearls-Crawford#.VAz7kvmwKL1>

Also mentioned this Sage Advice, website. --> <https://thesageadvice.wordpress.com/>

Here's an outline of what specific ruling is clarified through, according to what active players have been consulting.

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RULES CLARIFICATIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- **Is it true stats including racial bonuses cannot be above 18 at lvl1?** max is 20. -M.
- **Any chance you will give pointers for 4e classes out of 5e?** EK is not quite Swordmage. we're planning for conversion guides later this year -M.
- **Can a Barb2/Lock3 retrain an invocation into Pact Blade? (ie: is 5th level 5th level? or 5th warlock level? also, retrain rules)** up to the DM - depends on group expectations. -M
- **The pixie was size Tiny in 4e. Do you see Tiny being a possibility in 5e, or would they become Small for a PC race?** I think it's still Tiny, but the way we treat size in 5th makes it a pretty small issue for most classes. -M
- **The halfling lucky doesn't specify only the number on the die. So it only works on a roll of 1 after modifiers?** should specify natural 1. -M
- **what would the action sequence be like for sheathing one weapon, drawing another, and attacking? Is that all 1 action?** yeah - the intent is to avoid punishing players for that stuff by charging an action. -M
- **How does the term 'per turn' work? Could a PC who can make an attack 'per turn' make an attack on everyone else's turn?** yes, though you'd still need to use your action or reaction. -M
- **hiding: attacking w/ ranged it says you give away your location, does this cancel hiding? Doesn't say you are "seen" or "heard".** Yes, others are aware of you. -M
- **Can a low-init character ready an action, then take that action if legit triggered by a high-init character in the next round?** yes. -M
- **Is choosing a subrace required or optional?. Not 100% clear.** it's required - you're a step behind without one. -M
- **Was the "Dueling" fighting style intended to support a shield? "Dueling" doesn't scream "shield" at me.** A character with the Dueling option usually pairs a one-handed weapon with a shield, spellcasting focus, or free hand. -J
- **Mask of the Wild differs from Skulker. Restricts to natural light obscurity. Trouble adjudicating. Can you advise?** Mask of the Wild lets a wood elf try to hide when lightly obscured by anything in nature: the dim light of dusk, fog, etc. -J
- **Can an Action be a Bonus Action? i.e Can a Bard use a BA to grant Bardic Inspiration and an action to cast Healing Word?** Actions and bonus actions aren't interchangeable, so that bard could use Bardic Inspiration or healing word, not both on a turn. -J

HITTING THINGS

- **Does a halforc that criticals with a maul roll 5d6 or 6d6? There was a question because the halforc ability says one die.** just one die - great axes FTW! -M
- **2wf clarification: can only use 2wf to attack one creature since bonus action w/action, or can attack 2 diff. Enemies with 2wf?** can attack two targets. -M
- **Are we going to be able to charge into combat in the full rules? Curious why it isn't in Basic** yeah - the 3e and 4e rules made charging worth a separate rule. Oppy atk and move rules make it easy to spam charge. -M
- **When you crit, do you also roll all extra damage like Sneak Attack/Divine Strike again as well? Can seem like a lot.** yes - reroll all. -M
- **For 2-weapon fighting, do you get at most 1 bonus hit a turn even if you have Extra Attacks from the fighter? (Uses Bonus action)** that's correct. Since it uses your bonus action, you can only use it once. -M
- **Action Surge + Extra Attack means double attacks, IE 3 normal attacks + AS equals six attacks, yes?** yes. -M
- **Action Surge+TWF+Haste at 20th level how many att does this yield?** A bunch of attacks! At level 20, Attack action + TWF = 5 attacks. Action surge = 4 attacks. Haste = 1 attack. -J
- **Can 2-weapon fighting bonus action/attack be split up with movement? I think not, but was hoping for clarification. Thx!** Movement can happen not only before and after an action, but it can also happen between attacks. -J

RESTING & RECOVERY

- **Can stabilized PC spend HD after 1hr short rest even though it regain 1HP after 1d4hr?** believe that is correct - at 0 hp, a short rest lets you spend HD. -M
- **does Trance allow elves to get the benefit of long rest in 4 hours instead of 8?** nope, they still need 8 hours of rest, but spend only 4 of it zonked out. -M
- **at 1st level, if you take a long rest. Do you regain 1 HD back or none(from rounding down of .5)?** you get 1 - should be min. 1 for long rest. -M
- **"at least 1 hour of walking, fighting, ..." Long Rest interrupted by any combat or only combat that lasts more than an hour?** Must last 1+ hours to break it. -M

REACH & OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

- **Do reach weapons threaten 10 feet for the purposes of triggering opportunity attacks?** yes. -M
- **If I have reach (10 ft), do I only get an opportunity attack if enemy moves to 15 ft?** yes, you attack when they leave your reach. -M
- **Concerning weapons with the Reach property: Opportunity Attacks are provoked at 5' or 10' or both?** 10 feet. -M
- **Monsters w/ multiple melee reach get AoO from furthest? Ogre's large & has only 5' melee reach; AoO @ 5' reach?** in general, use shortest. -M
- **If an AoO occurs just before the trigger, how does a Qtrstaff work with Polearm Master? Aren't they out of reach?** The Polearm Master feat is an exception to the opportunity attack rule: "... when they enter your reach." -J
- **Does a polearm master opportunity attack interrupt movement?** The Polearm Master attack is in response to a creature entering your reach, so movement can be before and after it. -J

THOSE SNEAKY ROGUES

- **Rogue hidden behind tree. Can he shoot an arrow with advantage, or does stepping out negate it? Re-hide behind same tree after?** DM's call - suggest atk with advantage, but disad to hide again. IMO if rogue sees target from hiding while hidden, can attack. -M
- **Could a rogue hidden behind cover run to a target & Sneak Attack; are they hidden until after attacking or after leaving cover?** hidden until leave, but Adam might rule creature is distracted -M
- **Rogue Hides behind tree. Ogre can't see him. Leans out, shoots ogre, returns. Advantage on attack? Sneak attack? Same next turn?** I would say advantage on attack, disadvantage on check to hide again. -M
- **If a rogue attacks an enemy when emerging from a cover source, does he still gain benefit of stealth in the attack?** Only if the rogue is still hidden when making the attack. -M
- **question about rogues: any chance of a future subclass that allow them attack more than once per round without 2-weapon fight?** not without losing or modifying sneak attack. -M
- **Does a rogue get more than 1 reaction during the first round with thief's reflexes?** kind of - you get your reaction back when your turn starts. You can't accumulate more than 1. -M
- **CunningAction for dash,dash,move would be 30+30+30 right? (assuming 30 move speed) Or have I got my math wrong?** believe that's correct. -M
- **Can a rogue sneak attack with a net even if it deals no damage?** No, sneak attack is additional damage. -M
- **Does uncanny dodge work automatically on every seen attack the rogue gets hit with? Magic too?** Yep! Uncanny Dodge works against attacks of all sorts, even spell attacks. -J
- **is rogue sneak attack dbld on a crit style? DM say no.** The immortal question! "The DM has final say, but the intent is for Sneak Attack dice to be rolled again on a critical hit." -J

CLASS FEATURES

- **Is the bard's Jack of All Trades feature intended to apply to initiative?** Yes, Jack of All Trades can apply to initiative, since that roll is a Dexterity check. -J
- **can HalfOrc Monk use Savage Attacks trait with his unarmed strikes or Flurry? Or improvised weapons?** yes, that doesn't break anything. -M
- **Does a monk have to stand in place to make flurry of blows attacks or can he move between attacks as if they were extra attacks.** monk can move. -M
- **been a split on whether the immediately part of flurry meant you could $\text{atk}>\text{move}>\text{atk}>\text{move}>\text{atk}>\text{move}>\text{atk}$ or $\text{atk}>\text{move}>\text{atk} \times 3$.** when in doubt with the monk, ask "What would Bruce Lee or Jackie Chan do?" That answer is probably correct. -M
- **Quick question: Fighter "Second Wind". Usable in combat only?** nope, usable at any time. -M
- **Divine smite refers to "paladin spell slots." How does this interact with multiclassing, or is the word "paladin" redundant?** paladin is redundant. -M
- **if a fighter with the Duelist combat type uses a shield, does he still get his bonus?** The text reads "no weapon". yes, believe so. -M
- **for the champions expanded crit range, are 18-19 automatically a hit? Or are they only crit if attack hits?** believe you get the auto hit and double damage. -M
- **Does the Barbarian's rage give you advantage on melee attacks using strength? Pg. 48 PHB.** Rage doesn't grant advantage on melee attacks using Strength, but Reckless Attack does. -J
- **Can Warlock familiars (Ie Imp/Sprites) activate magic items? Ie Wand of Magic Missiles or a potion.** That's up to your DM. Nothing in the game says an imp or a sprite familiar can't activate a magic item. -J
- **For the Warlock Old One Pact Telepathy power. Is it one way or two way communication? I read it as one, but others don't.** The intent is for it to be one-way communication, but a DM could certainly rule that it's two-way telepathy, as in monsters. -J
- **Can a ranger's beast companion take reaction and make opportunity attack?** I would rule that the beast can make an opportunity attack. -J
- **If a Warlock forgoes an attack to let his Pact of the Chain familiar attack does it occur immediately or on it's next turn?** I would rule that the warlock commands the familiar to attack, and then the familiar does so on its turn. -J
- **Does an animal companion add the Ranger's proficiency bonus to its save DCs (for example, a Mastiff's bite)?** The ranger's proficiency bonus isn't added to the beast's save DCs, but a DM could certainly override that. -J
- **Does Agonizing Blast add damage per Eldritch Blast casting, or per beam? E.g. 5th level lock deals $2d10+2*\text{Cha}$, or $2d10+\text{Cha}$?** I would rule that you add your Charisma modifier whenever a beam hits. But I have my eye on this feature. -J

FEATS

- **There has been confusion over the durable feat and the meaning of "roll" does a 20 con wizard regain a min 10 or 15 hp w/ feat?** 10 - roll means die roll + mods. Anything that affects only the number yielded by the die will say so specifically. -M
- **so a class with d6 or d8 HD and a 20 con can use durable to get back more than max possible?** -yes. -M
- **Can you use the spell sniper feat to grab the Shillelagh spell? How about Thorn Whip?** Spell Sniper allows you to learn thorn whip, which includes an attack roll, but not shillelagh, which doesn't. -J
- **Can Great Weap Mstr & Polearm Mstr be combined (take -5/+10 with the bonus attack) and do you add the mod. to the damage?** Yep, you can combine them, and you do add your modifier to the damage. -J

SPELLS & MAGIC

- **Does a Wild Surge effect replace the effect of the spell cast triggering it or both effect happens?** A Wild Surge effect is meant to be in addition to a spell's effect. -J
- **With cantrips, does a MC caster use their character or class level for determining damage?** A multiclass character uses character level to determine the damage of a cantrip. -J
- **Can a wizard Burning Hands himself? His hands clearly aren't affected, but what about his feet?** nope - point of origin isn't in area. Wiz would have to want to immolate self. -M
- **Any advice on handling Clerics/druids with shields and spell casting? They seem disadvantaged without a hand free for S/M comps.** just stow that weapon in the shield hand for a moment and you're good - the rule isn't there to restrict, but to clarify. -M
- **I'm casting Burning Hands on you, I'm hidden, you don't know I'm there. Do you get disadvantage on that saving throw?** DM's call. -M
- **Ftr5/Wiz5/Clr5 you'd be a 15th lvl character, 10th lvl spellcaster, is dmg for cantrips on char lvl or caster lvl?** char level. -M
- **where is the Generalist wizard!?** didn't include one because schools no longer restrict spell access. -M
- **Does Truesight see through Illusions that are only in a target's mind, like Phantasmal Killer/Force or Weird?** DM's judgment, but I'd say no. -M
- **Can True Polymorph be cast on self? Some say only works on others, citing loss of spellcasting ability.** yes, just remember that concentration breaks it and the caster could stick into the form permanently. -M
- **Can dodging character with Sanctuary block chokepoint?** stuff like this is a big part of giving DMs tools to adjudicate and improvise - so many situational elements in an RPG. -M
- **If a creature is immune to cold and is hit by "Ray of Frost" do they suffer the 10-foot speed penalty in #DnD 5E?** yes - immunity applies only to damage. -M
- **can you cast a spell that uses somatic components if you wield a 2 handed weapon or a vertile weapon in 2 hands?** nope. -M
- **Does copying a spell scroll into a Wizard's spellbook consume the scroll? The basic rules don't seem to explicitly say so.** believe it does. -M
- **wizards cantrips Via elf racial ability. If one takes Shocking Grasp does the damage go up with Level?** yes, it goes up. -M
- **The overchannel ability for wizards. Can it be used to max cantrip damage? At no cost as well, since it's a 0 level spell?** as written, yes, but i'd house rule it to increase the damage by 1d12. -M
- **Wizards have insane damage (Meteor Swarm). Will other classes, like Fighters, be able to keep up?** yes - compare meteor swarm's 40d6 to 8 attacks from a fighter using action surge. Fighter can easily get up to 140 damage. -M
- **Can you crit with a spell (assuming it has an attack-roll)? Rules seems to indicate that you can.** yes, you can. -M
- **EmpEvoc +int mod,if thats on one target,is that still +intmod or +intmodX3?** empowered evocation applies only once per target. -M
- **Magic Missile, three missiles, three targets: Separate damage rolls, or once for all of them? What about a 2-1 missile split?** one damage roll per target. -M
- **Also noticed that Thunderwave gains +d8/spell level, while Burning Hands only gains +d6/spell level. Thunderwave wins later on.** yes, it's a little weird but judged to be easier than swapping die types at higher levels. -M
- **Heal replaces Cure Wounds completely when gained: Ranged, maximum and much larger hp regained, cures afflictions etc. Intended?** yes, but keep in mind it needs a higher minimum slot level. -M
- **so how will concentration spells work as potions?** same way - effect ends if you lose concentration. -M
- **if a stonskined wizard is taking damage should he make a concentration check?** yes, unless spell says otherwise. -M
- **With Meteor Swarm...how close do the four meteors have to be to one another? Anywhere in the spell's range?** anywhere in range. -M
- **Is there a line of effect in D&D and does Wall of Force block it?** in general, a barrier that stops physical objects stops spells. -M
- **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 save, such as acid splash and poison spray. -J
- **do you get crit-hits on spells that use and attack rather than a DC?** A spell attack can definitely score a critical hit. -J

- **Bonus Action Spell: You can't cast another non-cantrip CT1 spell but nothing prevent you from having already cast one right?** If you've already cast a spell of 1st level or higher on your turn, you can't cast a bonus action spell on that turn. -J
- **Can a MC Wizard 2/Cleric 18 learn a 3rd level spell, i.e fireball that he would find on is adventure?** That character wouldn't be able to learn fireball, since he doesn't have enough levels in the wizard class. -J
- **If I cast Shillelagh on my quarterstaff and have Polearm Master feat, does the bonus attack deal d4 or d8?** The bonus attack would use a d4. I like it: druid master of polearms. -J
- **If my Temporary Hit Points are 10 and I take 30 damage from an attack, what is the DC of my Concentration Check?** The DC is 15. When temporary hit points absorb damage for you, you're still taking damage, just not to your real hit points. -J
- **of someone is restrained by a spider attack: Web, or spell: Web, does misty step free them?** Or it travel with? I'd rule it frees them. -M
- **Is there a reason why the wording is inconsistent between Mage Armor and Unarmored Defenses? Mage Armor uses "Base AC".** The difference isn't intentional. -J
- **Does Twinned Spell make two spell instances (I.E., can't Concentrate on both spells) or change one spell instance to 2 targets?** One spell instance, two targets. -M
- **Can Wall of Stone be cast on dirt? It seems like its written to always need stone to merge to. Is that correct?** that's correct - need some stone to merge with or be supported by. for instance, a bridge is OK if the two ends touch stone. -M
- **Was trapped soul replaced with imprisonment? Is imprisonment supposed to be on the wizard spell list?** Trap the soul shouldn't be on the spell list. But yes, it is correct that imprisonment is there. -J
- **if i were to twin a chromatic orb, could I target the same creature twice?** ability specifies a second creature, so no. -M
- **So cantrips that improve with levels: character level or class level? My monk has Sacred Flame via Magic Initiate, e.g. character level -M.**
- **can a Cleric or Paladin cast spells requiring somatic components when wielding weapon + shield emblazoned with holy symbol?** I'd say yes if the holy symbol is being used as the material component of the spell, so yes if "S, M," but no if only "S." -J

EQUIPMENT

- **Confused about tools in game. Is it necessary to have proficiency in any of them to use them?** nope - you can still use them, just without the proficiency bonus. -M
- **but what about thieves tools? do you require prof to pick locks and disarm traps? No info in the sourcebook about this.** nope, anyone can try. you might need the tools to attempt it, or you might attempt at disadvantage if the DM so rules. -M
- **Would using bracers of armor change the way you calculate AC or can they stack with unarmored defence?** probably not stack - think of bracers and unarmored defense as establishing a base AC, like using natural OR manufactured armor. -M
- **is a rapier a light weapon as well as finesse? By the rules you can't fight with rapier and dagger and that seems off. Typo?** nope, not light. As a rule of thumb TWF is restricted to d6 weapons, iirc. Rapier is cast more as one hander/no shield in 5e. -M
- **Can thrown weapons be used for sneak attack damage? Seems to go against the qualifiers of sneak attack being Ranged-Finesse.** yes, they can. basically, as a DM feel free to let the rogue sneak attack with anything that deals a d6 or less. -M
- **what is the purpose of the light property on hand crossbows as Two Weapon Fighting rules specify only melee weapons can be used?** it might come into play with other abilities or DM rulings. For instance, tight passage where non-light weapons have disad. -M
- **Doffing armor says it can take half time with help, could a shield be doffed as a bonus action rather than an action with help?** Don't see why not - that'd be more of a DM ruling thing, though. -M
- **Things like caltrop/ball bearings ref to moving at half speed how do you do that? Treating each 5' as 10 like difficult terrain?** yes, essentially pay an extra 1' per 1' moved. -M
- **is there a way to make a non-magical weapon magical?** The easiest way to give (temporary) magic to a nonmagical weapon magic is to cast the magic weapon spell on it. -J
- **I notice people have different interpretation, does polearm increase reach always or only when attacking with it?** The reach property applies only when you attack with a weapon. Any use beyond that is up to the DM. -J
- **Do nets (thrown) use STR or DEX for attack rolls? Are they exempt from close combat disadvantage, as normal range is only 5feet?** Dex, since you can't make melee attacks with it. still take disad in close combat despite range. -M

- **do wands require a spell casting class? specifically detect magic and magic missile wands?** some wands do not - anyone can use the magic missile one, not sure about the other one. -M

MONSTERS

- **So an Adult Red has claws (5ft) and bite (10ft) and tail (15ft.) If I run from adjacent, when does he get to OA?** none - only if you move away, dragon picks which one to use. claws make most sense. -M.
- **in D&D 5e the number of monster's Hit Dice how are calculated? Are determined by the CR?** Start with HD, then determine CR. The CR calculation includes both offense (atks, dmg) and defense (AC, hp). -M
- **Sorry to be pestering you about this. Started in 4e with XP budgets and trying to wrap my head around this CR thing.** So CR represents a monster's power. You should avoid using monsters with a CR above the party's average level. in 4e terms, mostly the same, but instead of using any critter keep yourself to critters with CR = or less than PC level. -M
- **I'm running the LMoP (loving it!) and the Bugbear picked up a greatsword. With his Brute ability, would he do 3d6 or 4d6?** 3d6. -M
- **if a creature/pc has Resistance and then makes a saving throw against said resistance it is Half of Half correct?** yes. -M
- **do natural armor cap dexterity or accept full dex bonus?** Natural armor doesn't limit a creature's Dexterity bonus. -J

ADVENTURES

- **Redbrand Hideout Room 9 in the Starter Set is a deadly 1200XP of 1000XP budget for 5 LVL 2 characters. Intentional?** yes - charging in is a dangerous tactic, PCs are much better off trying to trick them. -M
- **For lvl5 PCs continuing on from LMoP and into the Hoard of the Dragon Queen, how hard is it to scale the monsters.** You could also simply start with chapter 4 of the adventure and play from there. -M

TIMELINES/SETTINGS

- **FR Camp Guide for 4e stated it had been 100yrs since the last [iteration ie3/3.5e] can we expect something similar for 5e?** Nope - timeline is not making a huge leap forward. The spell plague is over and the Sundering is at an end, but that's it. -M
- **They want a Dark Sun game 11 days after the PHB comes out? But what can I use for defiling rules?** I'd let defiling replenish the use of arcane recovery. -M