Penetration and negative modifiers

Jones
At risk of getting in trouble, cos my GM and my ex-GM (now a player) both disagree with me...

Is the -1 modifier to penetrating die cumulative?

Example, cos that won't make much sense:
My fourth level cleric casts a cure spell, healing 4d4 hitpoints.
I roll 2,3,3,4, then roll the grievous healing (d4-1) and get another 4, then roll the grievous healing again - is it d4-1 or d4-2?
I've searched around, but can't find anything specifically and clearly dealing with this.

DroolingBard
It would be 1d4-1. The -1 penalty doesn't stack.

The good thing about penetration is that the -1 penalty boots out some of the other penalties.

If you were firing a weapon that did 1d6-2 damage and rolled a 6, you'd be rolling 1d6-1 for penetration, NOT 1d6-3.

When does penetration apply?

CanIThinkOfName
I thought I had read somewhere that the penetration die is used for practically everything (damage, skill mastery, healing). Is this correct or is it just used for damage?

Geekbert
Skill mastery (and Honor die), damage and healing all gain penetration.

CEBrown
It is NOT used for hit points, ANY d100 or larger rolls (unless something uses that for damage, Gawds forbid!), or MOST d20 rolls (again only when they cause damage or healing or some such); I'm not sure if it applies when rolling treasure, but I wouldn't use it there even if I were supposed to. Everywhere else though. And on Damage or Healing rolls it's referred to as Grevious Damage or Grevious Healing...

Dude
There is a compiled list in the Combatant's Guide for when it does and doesn't apply.

Imperatrix
I didn't realize it applied to Skill Master Dice, that's *sweet*. What about when a new character has an Honor Dice of 1 due to Way Way Too Much Honor?

Here's the list from the Combatant's Guide, p99-100:

When "penetration" applies:

- Damage rolls
- Critical hit severity level (these "penetrate" downward as well)
- Hit points regained for healing spells
- Honor Dice
- Skill Mastery Dice
- Fractional Ability Improvement rolls

For the remedial, when "penetration" does NOT apply (unless specifically stated otherwise):

- Surprise rolls
- Initiative rolls
- Hit points gained on advancement
- To-hit rolls
- Saving throws
- Usage of skills
- Morale rolls
- Spell effects (other than how many points of damage a victim suffers or a target heals)
- Rolls on charts
- Wandering monster checks
- Number of creatures encountered

CanIThinkOfName
Thanks guys. I wasn't to sure about it (haven't got Combatants Guide yet). Wish my computer hadn't been messed up though, couldn't have used that info two weeks ago (cast cure mod. wounds on the half-ogre and got all fours). Oh, well, he's still alive (gonna be hard for him to bite it, though, he took on a Paddle-Footed Masticator all by himself and won, even though the GM rolled three crits in a row).

Dude
Then they get one. Not more than 1, because that would be silly. They aren't rolling a 1d1, they are
just getting an automatic 1 for their honor die. So, no penetration.

*Greymarch2000*

And even if it were a d1, if they rolled a 1 they would add d1-1. If a player tries it, make him roll dice forever!!!!!!!

*eddy*

The Errata says this:
Penetration Rolls: Penetration (rolling again when you roll the maximum on a die) is only used for critical severity level, damage, skill mastery level, ability increases due to leveling, magical healing and the Honor die when used for one of the above things.

HM Errata

**Crossbows**

*leif106*

Q: Do Crossbows really have a 50% chance for penetration damage?

*Foundry_Dwarf*

Actually, "no" or "not always".
A crossbow (light of heavy) penetrate on maximum on the die and maximum -1, therefore a heavt crossbow, used against a small targety, penetrates on a 7 or 8 on the d8. This is only a 1 out of 4 chance of penetrating. Against medium targets each die (the damage is 2d4+1) has a 50% chance of penetrating, therefore it actually has a 75% chance of at least one die penetrating.

**Crossbows and Penetration Damage**

*nivek71*

I was thinking about using a heavy xbow for the first time and read the note on its penetration, saying that it does on max and max -1 so if the damage if dmg is d4 then there is a 50% chance of penetration. Just checking, it would make alot of snse though.

*Dude*

That is correct. Crossbows tend to do much more penetration than your standard weapons. They are very nasty, but are slower than bows, so it tends to balance out.

*jtolman*

Unless you specialize to grand mastery in one of them.. thn for some reason you can fire a light cross bo as fast as a bow or faster.. and the heavy crossbow can get up to 2 per round.. which is just plainly NOT POSSIBLY considering no one can crank a heavy cros bow in under 3 second...

Sorry just one of my pet peeves

*Ranael*

Its grand mastery in a heroic fantasy setting.....you have to make some allowances. You can chalk it up to one of those mysteries, like how Legolas never runs out of arrows, or how action heroes never die in explosions as long as they're leaping out of a window when it happens. =)

*Outlaw*

There are many a time when I took home most damage dealt from firing a Heavy Crossbow at a large creature (3d4). Penetration is great, as is the damage. Sure you only have one round, but there have only been few occasions where I wasn't in melee after that first round anyway.

**On the Nuclear Winter Fireball**

Q: I can't find the stats for the Nuclear Winter Fireball.

A: The spell does not exist. It used to in the Knights comics, but not in the HM game.

**What are the advantages of registering with the HMPA?**

*crostrec*

My GM told me about Hackmaster Registration. I would like to know the benefits and protocol of such an action from someone who is actually registered.

*baeyescalder*

Protocol: go to Hackmaster association home page. If you have a credit card, you can register a new membership online-the registration link being in the right-hand corner of the browser window. You can also register by U.S. mail, but I'm not sure where right now since K&C is not in one office. Registration is $9.99 U.S. for sidekick members and $24.99 for full members.

Benefits: YMMV (your mileage may vary). The official benefits depend on membership level. Sidekick members get a member pin, a badge corresponding to their branch in the HMA, and game effect cards. They can also play sanctioned characters at tournaments and in sanctioned home games (basically you play by the HMA rules under a sanctioned GM and have at least three players).
Members get hospitality benefits at conventions Kenzer and Company attends, plus Kenzer and Company product as loot at tournaments. Full members differ only in that they receive the currently electronic Hackjournal, the official publication of rules and other Hackmaster material. Presently as the benefits are being reworked since Hackjournal went electronic, full members also get some extra downloads.

HMGMA members of either level can access the HMGMA forum so they can talk without players listening. All members can be promoted in level for participating in HMA events and only members can submit to Hackjournal. The Foundry Dwarf is looking into more membership benefits at this time—exact benefits to be determined later.

Depending on where you live, you might be part of a regional chapter that organizes more Hackmaster events. If not, you can form one or participate in the events of regional chapters that are kind enough to let you.

I'm Wrack Gut of the Dragonlords chapter so I've gotten to meet great people at our chapter tournaments and at Origins—the membership runs most of the events and decides what tournaments to run save at Origins and Gencon.

Yet the best benefit is that you can run your campaign as you wish, as long as you play by the official rules—no metaplot here that you must play. And the player characters from your home game can play anywhere in the world—met a great guy named Nate who was in town for a few weeks and all his adventures with my group transferred over to his old group.

Plus, sanctioned Hackmaster is playing the best game ever the way it was meant to be played.

Oh, and Aces & Eights will be compatible. I'm already over the possibilities.

Is HackMaster a serious gaming system?

Jhulae
Okay.. I've been reading the boards for a bit and I've seen things written about the Smart-ass smackdown table, coupons, and other things. I've even ordered a HM player's book from my FLGS (which isn't in yet). I know the game is designed after the game played in the KotDT comics, and is, in part, a work of parody.

My biggest question, however, is this: Is Hackmaster a viable game system, and is it capable of being played more seriously than what the posts seem to indicate? Humor is all well and good, and may be fine for a different feel in a campaign, but I also want a serious system that offers the possibility of an in-depth RP experience for a more seriously minded group.

bloodymage
Someone point this fine young lady to about six different threads!

Jhulae, you can make HM as serious or as slapsitck as you like. My group plays at the schtick, but it's just a friendly game of good ol' original AD&D with kewl frills. You won't be sorry you ordered the book. Now, hurry up and join the HMA!

Vogelles
The feeling of the game as played is fully dependant on the gamemasters rendering really, from an extremely precise "ultimate AD&D" to a loving laugh.

LurkerWithout
The game is VERY much a serious system...For some example check out the Craven Monk forum...or HackMaster Tales...

Paul_L_Ming
Hiya.

Liek the others said, HM can be played as "silly" or as "serious" as you and your players want. I use it as a "new edition of AD&D"; basically, what 3e should have been. There are numerous "silly/KotDT" things, and the writing style is quite "Gygaxian", but the rules are solid and modular like 1e/2e. That is, if you don't want to use the AIP system (that's "Alignment Infraction Points"; a parody rule of the alignment system, basically), then you don't have to. If you want to use simplified weapon damage of your own creation as opposed to the S/M/L system), you just drop it in. No fuss, no muss.

The only things you really have to "deal with" is some of the words/parody-text like "dawg", "gawd" and "wurld", a handful of "silly skills" and spell names, and a smattering of other 'silliness'. Nothing you can't ignore or Jiffy-Marker out...

Me and my group play it "seriously". Not 'sanctioned', 'parody-esque', or 'silly' in any real way...but we do have a slightly lighter-hearted
feeling and attitude towards it. This is a good thing. So far I've used HM for Birthright, Kingdoms of Kalamar (the 'old edition'; not the new 3e version), Greyhawk and Eisla (my own uber-low power campaign world).

Hendrik
Dear Jhulae,

firstly, welcome to the boards and welcome to the fold of Hackmaster.

Secondly:

Hackmaster certainly was inspired in part by the comics. That is where the parody and satire part comes from. But, the comic has its root in "ye olde days" of roleplaying and, methinks, comes from a love of the original AD&D. I definitely agree with Paul that Hackmaster is the better 3rd edition of AD&D than 3rd-point-five. Hackmaster is more AD&D-esque in flair, feel, originality and rules-mechanisms.

I asked myself the very same question. I bought Hackmaster because I love KODT and - to put it simple - was darn curious about what Kenzer had cranked out. Then, I read it. Then, I saw and understood. Sure, I had lots of laughs - and still have - while reading the books, but... Hackmaster is a "normal" roleplaying game. You can laugh more than with other games, which mostly are boring reads. You will laugh as much as with other games in play. But, you will never see the game ridiculed when first you have played it. If you have the least love for the old, real AD&D, then you will love Hackmaster. It is as "serious".

Cheers,
Hendrik

What does HackFactor mean?

NinjaMessiah
Ok- I'm still trying to master the rules before playing.

what is the hack factor of a monster mean? I guess it is the total # of levels that it provides a challenge for- but I am just guessing

LurkerWithout
Partly...But a pc's HackFactor is determined by many things outside of just their level...Damage dealing potential, bonuses to hit, special abilities, etc...HJ and IIRC the monster matrix have the formula for figuring out HackFactor...But I hate complicated math, so I just use the HackFactors as a generalguideline....

jtolman
It is a Little more complicated than that.. Hackfactor is a representation of an individuals or monsters Damage Power in combat... NPCs and PCs can have a hackfactor that is higher than thier level

jedimaster
It is a complex formula that exactly represents the toughness of a creature. The worst part is solving the 5th order nonhomogenous differential equation...

No seriously the formula is in the front of the Hacklopedia Monster Matrix.

What is Damage Cap?

Geezerjoe
I thought I'd read somewhere on the forums that damage rolls are capped by the weapon. For instance, a weapon that did 1d10 damage could only do 10 damage maximum, after strength is applied while specialization and magical bonuses would increase the damage cap.

I cannot find this in the PHB or GMG though ... can anyone give me a reference? Or was this someone's house rule for preventing 20 Str Halfling Fighters specialized in throwing daggers?

Sir_Tal
It is in the errata somewheres. Topher has put together an awesome PDF for errata that has it in there.

And actually, it was to prevent ginormously strong characters from doing like 10 damage with a sewing needle or dart.

And as I understood it, the caps were actually like this:
A weapon that does 1d10 of damage can have a maximum of +10 bonuses total. Which means it can do a max total of 20 points of damage. Likewise a weapon that can do 1d6 can only have a damage bonus of +6 applied to the roll. (Maximum of 12.) Anyone else see it this way?

**Phentari**
The Strength bonus is capped as per GMG, page 92, second column middle.

The official errata clarifies and expands this. The total maximum damage bonus for a weapon is equal to the maximum base damage roll of the weapon, sans penetration.

A weapon which does 1d10, therefore, would have a maximum total damage bonus--from Strength, specialization, Monk abilities, Divine Smite, or what-have-you--of 10. Anything above that would be wasted.

The main exception to this rule is the weapon's magical damage bonus, which falls outside this range. If the weapon in question was a +3 weapon, for example, the maximum damage would be 1d10+13...1d10+10 (capped damage bonus) +3 (magical damage bonus.)

**TheUnbelievableYGuy**
However, you also need to know that a backstab's maximum damage bonus is determined based on the total damage range of the backstab, not just the weapon (Griftmaster's Guide, p. 130 - third paragraph under Backstab). Alright, technically it says only the Strength bonus is capped by the total damage range, but I expect to see an errata on that.

**Ghost_of_Vortigern**
Wasn't it decided that a player with a Great Honor "+1 to every die roll" could do a max of 22 damage (10+1 plus 11 from modifiers) with a weapon that does 1d10 damage?

**CEBrown**
Correct. The bonus for Honor and magical enchantment happen after other modifiers are applied and can go over the cap. At least until erratta changes it again...

**Can Monks harm creatures requiring magic weapons to hit?**

**at**
Do monks unarmed blows ever count as magical? There are many monsters that require magical weapons to damage and this puts a monk at a big disadvantage.

Can they use magical items or weapons as "Improvised" weapons and deal magical damage?

I did not know were to post this since this is my first post ever on this site.

**Kren**
all i found was that magical weapons of the types allowed to monks may be used.

perhaps something in the combatants guide? I know barbarians can strike creatures which require magical weapons to hit, even when the barbarian doesn't have one. (It's a level-based skill)

**cid_ayrbourne**
They can use magical weapons of any type which they can normally use, or certain magic items would give them the ability to use their unarmed attack with a magic bonus. Otherwise, no. Using a weapon in an improvised manner confers no bonus what-so-ever, magical or otherwise. (Aside from those a monk would normally gain from any other improvised weapon).

He could use a magical weapon outside his standard weapon list, but at the normal penalties for use.

Barbarians are the exception to the rule. Maybe if you had a dual classed Barbarian/Monk... But then again, any GM who let's something like that happen should turn over his credentials...

**Question on Multiclassing**

**Miller857**
Multi-classing classes out of the various splatbooks. Specifically the fighter and thief books. Can you use soldier, or swashbuckler in place of fighter in the various combos?

**dungeonmaster**
NO, though you can Dual class among the same class/subclasses.

**Phentari**
Nope--multiclasses are specific. A fighter/magic-user is a fighter/magic-user, not a soldier/magic-user or a fighter/battlemage.

**Question on Honor Bonus and Dice**

**Miller857**
Can honor dice be added to anything in combat? I am aware of adding it to to-hit and damage rolls,
but what about sleep spells max hitdice effected, or magic missile's damage? Also, do you get the bonus for being in great honor to all the previously mentioned dice? If a mage threw a 10d6 fireball, would he get +1 per die for great honor?

DRGNKLLR
no honor dice in combat rolls, great honor bonus of +1 is added to each die rolled

Question on Dirty Fighting and Called-Shot

Miller857
Dirty fighting and called shots. If you do either, you crit on a 19-20. If you do both, do you crit on an 18-20?

DRGNKLLR
19-20 only, even when using both

Phentari
This one's probably debatable, but the wording of the rules indicates that the two don't stack—it's 19-20, no matter what.

Question about honor loss

Badger3k
Tried to do a search, but had some trouble (probably a lot of references for honor). Anyway, when you lose honor, through honor duels, using honor dice, or purging honor (for example), does that get taken from your honor factor of your temporary honor? The writing is vague to me, but seems to suggest it's from the honor factor. If so, then you gain honor to the temporary, but lose it from the factor. Is this correct?

baakyocalder
Temporary honor is really just a bookkeeping thing—you lose a slight amount of Honor for certain actions—but this matters not till the end of the session (or at least a break when the PCs are training or sometime where it would be logical to adjust honor).

Permanent Honor is affected by Honor duels, burning Honor dice, and Honor purging and the impact is immediate.

Questions on Cantrips

dungeon
How are mages able to acquire cantrips on the creation of their character? In the books it pretty much says that characters can start off with cantrips equal to twice their Intelligence, AND their regular GM given spells... both of them? I know that a mage can have up to 36 cantrips... right? Well... I was reading HJ 4 I think (don't have it here with me). It was talking about how cantrips are allowed if your GM allows you to have them? Can someone clarify this for me. It is such a fickle situation. I would just like to know how many cantrips are allowed if any at all... also... when a mage "studies" and remembers his spells... you can instead of remembering a 1st level spell remember 4 cantrips... given this can you instead remember 8 cantrips in place of a 2nd level spell?

Imperatrix
The assumption is that mages learn cantrips during their apprenticeship period, when they are doing the menial tasks of their master's household. Cantrips are like mini-magic, little functional bits of useful magic that aren't considered powerful enough or elaborate enough to be a "real" spell (I differ, cantrips are incredibly useful). An apprentice picks up cantrips to help with the household tasks, and so has that book with them upon the start of play. Like keeping your old high school chemistry notes to help with uni classes.

The limit on cantrips is Intelligence*2 (I don't remember the source, sorry). In theory, a character who runs INT up to 25 can have 25*2 = 50 cantrips. But that's one honkin' big spellbook just for cantrips!

Yes, you can choose to memorize 8 cantrips instead of 2 first-level spells, or 12 cantrips instead of 3 first-level spells. Cantrips are *really* useful at times!

CEBrown
It's somewhere in the PHB - but that's for TOTAL STARTING Cantrips... You're still limited by the number of spells per level within each Cantrip Type, I THINK. And the number of cantrips a book can hold is in the SSG. You'd need two books for 50.

Dude
A cantrip spell book is limited to 36 spells per the PHB (or Spellslinger's guide, I forget which). A starting mage can have 2*INT cantrips to start. A starting mage who wants to cast cantrips keeps their cantrip BOOK.

I'd say that limits a starting mage to 36 cantrips. A mage can give up 1 first level spell per day to cast 4 cantrips, or 2 to cast 8, etc.
You can discontinue casting cantrips at any time and get that spell slot back. Remember to use the Spellslinger's Guide to determine how big your cantrip and normal spell book is.

*bakyo Calder*
Dude's pretty right on here. A few things to add: there are new cantrips of the Divination school in Hackjournal #9, finally giving diviners access to cantrips. Also, double-specialist and sole practitioner magic-users do not use cantrips for they are beneath these students of the arts.

The PHB is quite clear that only first-level spell slots can be used to memorize cantrips.

Oh, and unlike your standard starting spells which are determined randomly, if you get a cantrip book for your magic-user group character, you get to choose which cantrips are in the book. Jo-Jo Zeke is throwing the players a bone here, so you'd best take it.

**Questions on Threshold Of Pain**

*hamiltri*
PG 105 GMG.

It says to add your wisdom bonus to your save throw vs. death or collapse etc...

Which bonus do you add? Magical Defense adjustment?

Also it says if a person takes half the hitpoints the had at the start. This means the start of the game, or the start of that level, since its says 'at the start' and then ends, I'm assuming at the start of the game, eh?

*Chuck*
It *is* the magical defense adjustment. Also, it's the total number of hitpoints the character has that's the basis for determining TOP.

*hamiltri*
Alrighty, so if someone has 25 hp at first level their ToP would be 13.

At 2nd level they roll say a d8 +2 (cont) and get a 6+2 for 8, which brings them to 32 their new ToP would be 16, right?

*ikvsabre*
Correct.

**Questions on Advancement**

*SpedGuy*
A while back, I asked what happened when a character no longer qualified for his or her class (because of alignment, race, or stat issues) and got an unofficial errata from upstairs that seemed to go over well that that character couldn't advance in level until things got back into acceptable ranges.

All well and good... but now I have a protige' Blood Mage. His wisdom is 8/97 and cannot basically cannot avoid going into the unacceptable 9 or higher range next level. Solutions? Can I choose not to gain a stat as I go up in levels? Does the above errata not apply here? Or should I start hitting the booze or find some wisdom draining monsters?

*Topher*
The stat requirements only matter at character creation, so the blood mage's Wisdom can exceed 8 with no adverse effects. This is noted in the Clarifications section of the Errata PDF. The only thing that matters when a character's stats go out of the normal range is that a character may not be able to perform certain tasks of that class very well, such as a fighter with a reduced strength being unable to effectively wield his sword, but he would still be a member of that class.

**I'm looking for details on the Bloodmage**

*EricShift*
Whats is a Bloodmage?

Where can I find out more info?

*Calenur*
They're mages that cast spells by ripping the very essence out of living creatures around them. You can find all the info you want in the Spell Slingers Guide.

-I wouldn't recommend them for a party player =)

*EricShift*
They sound cool.

Why not for a party player?

*Calenur*
No, but your party would when they start to lose hit-points or die when you cast a spell.

Jieichou
Living creatures around them? Are we looking at the same class? The table accounts for 28 possible results; of those, only 14 don't hurt the Blood Mage at all (and 7 of those 14 are the 2-8 "No ill effect" thing). Of the rest, it goes from a 50/50 chance between ability damage or HP damage all the way up to sucking all life out of everything within 12d10 feet, including the Blood Mage. Sure, you can roll a Save versus Spells to avoid the negative effects ... if you don't mind the Spell Mishap when you fail. And you will fail, eventually.

Too risky a class, in my opinion. It's nice to do 3d4+1 with a 1st-level spell, no arguments there, but a Pyrotechnician can do that just as easily.
And, with the Blood Mage, you have to look at the low levels, because none of them are gonna last long enough to get the REALLY good spells.

DoctorDoom
I have never played one, but I have ran one in my champagne. The blood mage is one of the most over power characters that I have ever seen in Hackmaster. Many of the low level spells allow you to kill WAY higher level characters with ease.

The spell Blood Mark for example is only a second level spell. All who gaze upon it must make a saving throw vs spell or attack the recipient bare handed. The recipient gets no saving throw against it and it last for TWO WEEKS! It has been pointed out that a blood mage could cast this on a fighter and get many the free attack of opportunity for those who attack him barehanded.

The spell Blood Thirst is also broken. The victim again, gets no saving throw and must do no other action but look for a vessel to drink blood from. A 10th level fighter could be riding on a horse and have this spell cast on him. The fighter would get no saving throw, drink from the horse and get attacked from all sides while he does nothing but drink blood.

As for the drawbacks, the biggest is trying to hide the fact that you are a blood mage from the general population.

Another drawback is to harm people or yourself after casting. This is no big deal if your character doesn’t care about those around you. If you keep your honor up and have a couple of coupons, you’ll never have to worry about those effects. In the game that I was running, it only came up twice.

The worst drawback by far is the magic item creation. They can only make necromancy magic items. They can’t even cast the enchant item spell and will have to have another mage cast the spell for him because it is barred.

The bloodmage is only good for one thing, and that is killing. With spells like blood missile, Blood Mark, and blood thirst they are the most brutal mage class in the game.

Also if you plan on playing one make sure you have as high of a constitution as possible. When you woeful cast spell and may loose Constitution points, its not such a big loss when you have a 25 con.
Never have I had so many problems with the power wielded by a PC at such low levels.

I have loads of stories about the Bloodmage that I ran for.
He ran the group with an Iron fist. None of the other PC’s dared to oppose him. This was Partly my fault because I was new to the system and let a Ring of Hefty Spell Casting slip through a random magic item roll with out properly reading it.

This particular blood mage could deal almost 90 Points of damage with no saving throw to any creature he wished. If any other character questioned his authority, a mere gesture of him with his out stretched fist (symbolizing the ring) would shut the Player up quickly or five blood missiles dealing about 24 points of damage each would be let fly. He took total control of all items found by the party and they were rationed out at his whim.

Even when I managed to get the Ring of Hefty Spell Casting away from him, he STILL was over powered with spells like blood thirst and blood mark.

As for his drawbacks of hurting people around him, that was of little concern for this blood mage. Those were rare instances though. He kept to his alignment and was always at great honor. So when casting accidents did occur, opportunist, honor mulligans or coupons kept it from being a problem. Even if it happen, so what, all plants died around him or the 100 hp fighter loses 4 hp.

The ONLY thing that I had against this character was the fact that they were looked down upon by
other mages and that they were illegal in most civilized areas. He was a member of an adventuring guild and was tossed out when it was found that he was a blood mage. The father of this particular character was a druid (that the player had played years before) and he disowned his son for the practice of the blood arts.

The player to this day claims that blood mages shouldn’t be looked down upon. That wild mages are much more likely to draw death and destruction upon others on accident.

Also, the ANY alignment rating of this character class has got me baffled. Why would any non evil character in their right mind play a blood mage. They transfer the life force from people and being around them and use it to forward their own means.

This class should be NPC only. No PC should have THAT much power at that low of a level.

**Followthrough - Do I need a new "to-hit" roll?**

**Hendrik**

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of Hack:

Excuse my simple question, but I need to know now and haven't got my books with me...

Do I need to roll a new "to-hit" roll when deciding to follow-through?

Pro YES

The next in line should be entitled to his own defence.

Pro CONTRA

Making another to-hit roll would defeat the purpose and simplicity of the follow-through. A new to-hit roll with a "set" amount of damage in case of a hit would likely be worse than a new to-hit with damage being resolved as per the normal rules, i.e. that damage would likely be higher.

Cheers,

Hendrik

**HackMonkey**

As the rules currently stand, no new 'to-hit' roll is required.

The 'bonus' hit is conferred by the situation* more than the skill of the attacker.

*i.e. adjacent to the original target, and within reach of the attacker.

**blackstone**

In the current rules, no to-hit roll is needed for follow through damage.

**Help with surprise clarification**

**Trudge**

Ok. I am going to start up my Hackmaster game soon. This will be my first time as a Hackmaster gm, in fact The first time playing Hackmaster period. The whole group is new to HM. My question is I need a clarification on surprise. Pg.149 in the Phb states surprise fairly clearly IMO, but the GMG Pg.88 confuses me as to how surprise is supposed to be done. It contradicts the PHB ruling and seems to be worded poorly. Can the powers that be PLEASE help me sort this out. Is the PHB ruling the way to go? Or do I use the GMG to figure out surprise rulings? If so, I would ask someone to explain to me how it works.

**backjiff**

First off, there are no contradictions in HackMaster... only apparent contradictions.

Secondly, if you think you have found a contradiction, remember that the rules in the GMG supercede the rules in the PHB.

Now, onto the meat of the question: surprise mechanics. When the PCs encounter others and there is a chance that one or both sides could be surprised, both sides roll 1d10.

If either side rolls a 1, 2, or 3, they are surprised. To determine the number of segments that the surprised party stands around gaping, subtract the surprised party's die roll from the non-surprised party's die roll. The difference is the number of surprise segments.

Each surprised character can subtract his or her Reaction Adjustment from the number of surprise segments (although this can never be reduced to below 0).

Each segment that one side had total surprise on the other, the non-surprised party can act. They may make one full attack, move 1/10 of their movement rating, begin casting spells, etc.

When there are members on both sides that are not surprised, initiative is rolled. All non-surprised combatants get a bonus to their roll equal to the
number of surprise segments remaining. Initiative results of 0 or less indicate attacks made during the surprise segments, and these characters can act again during the first round.

Those are pretty much the rules from the GMG as I understand them. The surprise rules in the PHB are certainly less complex (and less vicious— as the possibility exists of having up to 9 surprise segments wherein monsters can have their way with the party— and vice-versa!). If you're running an unsanctioned game, there's nothing wrong with using the simplified PHB rules.

IZJosef
Well, first off, let me explain why it is not a contradiction. Following the "surprise round" in which the unsurprised are provided with 1-9 segments to do "stuff," there is a new round with initiative, etc. So there is one round of surprise in which those surprised do not get to act, the unsurprised merely have more actions than what most people would interpret by reading the PHB. That would be an error on the part of the reader. Don't worry, I think everyone does that the first time.

hackjeff is mostly correct, here is what I would add/clarify:

Movement During Surprise
Each segment of surprise a character who is not surprised can move 1/5th his movement rate (twice the normal speed), unless there are characters from the opposing group who are not surprised, in which case all characters who are not surprised can move 1/10th their movement per segment (normal speed).

Attacks per Segment of Surprise
Just to clarify, the unsurprised get a full round of attacks per segment of surprise (not to be read as a single full attack), provided of course that they don't move instead. Ranged attacks also work differently (not every segment), check the table in the GMG for when ranged attacks during surprise go off.

baakyocalder
There's a good clarification of how frequently one is surprised and situations that change the base modifiers in "Demystifying Surprise," by Al Beddow on pages 11 and 13 of Hackjournal #7. Page 11 is the table and page 13 is the text explaining the table. To summarize for those Acute Alertness happy-players and confused GMs: the surprised only on x number is a BASE chance

of surprise. There is a typical surprise range, as discussed in the GMG, but not all creatures surprise as easily (or are surprised as easily) and obviously certain situations make surprise more likely. It's easier to be surprised by a bunch of orcs if they are sneaking up on you while your bard is playing songs that if those orcs are playing war drums while your party is listening.

Being surprised is very, very, bad, so learn to minimize how often you are surprised and how often you surprise if you don't wish to end up with a dead character. He or she who hacks first often hacks last.

Question about level advancement with multiple classes

Solairen
How does lvl advancement for multi class characters work? Do you take a BBI and roll for all your abilities for each class each time you advance? Do you take half your rolls for abilities each time? I have not been able to find anything that told specifically about this.

Topher
You get a full BBI, but only half of the percentage rolls for abilities and half of the hit points roll.

baakyocalder
Or if triple-classed, one-third. Note these rolls carefully—that way you can modify the fractionals when you advance in other classes. The current Hackmaster PC Record Book available from finer gamestores and direct from Kenzer and Company provides a tracking box for this information.

CEBrown
Do you have a page reference? That's what we'd thought, and my gnome used this rule, but our GM then went back through the books after my character's death and could not find it; the current gnome got to roll his increase fully and keep it...

Topher
In the Errata under General HackMaster Clarifications:

Fractional Ability Score increases due to leveling:
For multi-classed characters, Fractional Ability Scores are averaged in the same way that hit dice are averaged. The value rolled is divided by the number of classes.

Dude
Page 73 of the PHB (Second Printing).
Question about a Fighter with Myrmidon Package

CLD
Does said fighter receive two specializations?

jtolman
Plain and simply no.... as the Rule that, "no fighter can have more than 1 Specilization", comes before any other rule.

What it means when it says that you get a free specialization is that you don't have to pay the BPs for it... it still takes up 2 weapon proficiency slots also.

Question about Barbarians and Magic Item Experience

Cujolink
Alrighty, I have a Barbarian in the party and a question arose last night. Barbarians tend to destroy magic items, so lets say the party gets a magic dagger and the barbarian destroys it to stay true. The question is would the barbarian and only the barbarian get the EPs for it... it still takes up 2 weapon proficiency slots also.

I think it's the first one cause the latter would mean double dipping experience.

Thanx ahead of time.

Topher
The key reference is:

GMG p. 213 - "Note: EP Value is the number of experience points a character is awarded for using potions and scrolls. Weapons, armor and long-
term miscellaneous items are awarded 1/10th the EP Value listed, per use or per week."

Therefore, the party, having never used the item gets no experience. The barbarian gets the full EP value for destroying the dagger.

However, let's say for argument's sake that the thief in the party had used the dagger for a couple of weeks before the barbarian managed to get and destroy it. I would have awarded the thief 10% of the value for the first two weeks, then 80% to the barbarian (since he failed to destroy/allowed the thief to use the dagger for two weeks).

Question on weapon specialization

indianaorc
I'm a little confused about the only allowing Fighter to specialize. Unless i'm reading this wrong only the Fighter can specialize and master a given weapon, not any class that falls under FIGHTER. For example Meurte the Fighter can specialize in a long sword but Sarge the soldier can't specialize in a long sword. Isn't that a little out of whack? I can see most of the fighter classes not specializing but at the very least the Soldier and the Samurai. It seems to me that the soldier would specialize as a member of an armed force he would focus on a given instrument of death, same for the samurai. Unless i'm reading the explanation wrong and all FIGHTER classes can specialize, it seems a little off balance that only the randomn fighter would be able to become very handy with his weapon of choice.

Dude
You read it correctly, only a single classed Fighter can specialize. The fighter subclasses can't.

There are a few exceptions: Zealot of Shona, Knight Errants, and the Myrmidon package (I think that's the one).

jtolman
the archer package gets Spec in a missile weapon usually bow.
Nope - they have already specialized in an ASPECT of fighting instead of a WEAPON.

I can see most of the fighter classes not specializing but at the very least the Soldier and the Samurai.

Well, if your Soldier isn't also an Archer or Myrmidon you probably should leave him an NPC (he's a Red Shirt...). As for the Samurai, the mods they get already make Specialization look like something for babies... Giving one Specialization on top of that (say via the Myrmidon package) is just obscene... I know - I've tried it...

**Question on determining the level of a multiclass character**

*Cmurder*
The PHB describes the intially creation of a multiclassed character, does that mean you can make one at first level and how do you really determine a multiclassed character's lvl? is it rounding or addition?

*Ghost_of_Vortigern*
How do you determine a multi- or dual-classed PC's level? Depends to what you're referring at the time. If the player wants to know what magic-user spells he has access to, use the character's magic-user level. Same answer with regard to clerical spells. If the character is attacking as a fighter and the GM needs to use his level to determine his "to hit" number, the character's fighter level is used.

So a third level cleric/fourth level fighter with a 12 wisdom, for example, would have access to four first level spells and one second level spell.

*jtolman*
If your trying to determine the characters Honor window and honor die? Use the highest level of his chalsses and add one for each additional call he has. For instance.... A Fighterlv 4/ mage lvl 6 would be a level 7 for honor purporses. A Cleric lv1 3/ mage lvll 4/ thief lvll6 would be lv1 8 for honor.

*droolingBard*
And if you're trying to find out if your sanctioned, multi-class character can join in a tournament, use the following formula:

Take the highest class's level, and add one more level for each class that it is multi-ed with.

Little Johnny wants to participate in his nearby con's Sanctioned Hackmaster tournament, but has a multi-classed character. He's not quite sure he can be part of it, so he makes a quick calculation:

The Tournament is for levels 4-6, and his Sanctioned character is a Level 5/5/5 Fighter/Cleric/Mage. Taking the highest level (5) and adding 2 (one for each of the other classes), we find that Johnny's character is effectively level 7. Too bad Johnny, you shouldn't have killed off every other character that your group tried to make...looks like you got just a few too many EPs there.

(For Dual Class characters, just add the levels. A 2/5 Fighter/Mage would be level 7 for tourney purposes.)

*jtolman*
actually.. by the last ruling I had though BOTH multi classing and Dual classing were done the same.. just add 1 extra level to the highest level class to determine level for honor and tourneys.

*droolingBard*
Hmmm...I always thought that was the way you did it with Dual-Classing....I'm possibly wrong. Anybody who knows better want to chime in?

*Cmurder*
Does the take the highest, and add 1 for every extra class, work for actually determining a non-sanctioned character example: a 7 lvl MU / 7 lvl Cleric count as an eight or a 14. I'd like to know.

*CEBrown*
Per the current rules, that would be an 8th level HackMaster character, but a 14th level 3e character - which is probably where any confusion comes from. And that character would cast spells as a 7th level caster in either class - and in either system.

*Fjordrunner*
Alright, I'm still confused by this "Effective Level" thingy. I understand the tournament constraints... but does this also apply to sanctioned home games?

If I'm charting the party's alignment, the Multi-Classed character only adds his highest level to the equation (a 5/6 would be considered a 6th level character for this purpose).

If I'm charting party honor or fame, the Multi-Classed character adds his highest level plus 1/2 of his other levels (the same 5/6 would be considered a level 9 character for this purpose).
If I'm trying to determine if my Multi-Classed character can go to the big show (tournament), I use his highest level plus one for each additional class (now the 5/6 is a level 7 character for this purpose).

There are 3 different rules for determining a character's level (I would have to assume that Dual Classed characters would use the same rules as Multi-Classed ones, even though it wasn't expressly mentioned). So which rule do you apply to the following situations?

1. I want to know if my character is in Great Honor. Personally, I think this should be based off of the rules for determining Party Honor... but that's just my take on it.

2. This one is my personal dilemma... I don't want to lose my valuable protege, but the career path I've chosen for him could sky-rocket his level, depending on this ruling. When will my Multi/Dual-Classed protege decide to sever our relationship? If I'm a 7th level single class MU and my protege is a 5th level Cleric, what happens when he Dual-Classes to Thief? Does he suddenly count as 1 level higher? What about when he becomes a 5/3, is he now a 7th level character and thus ready to strike out on his own? What if he were 5/2 Cleric/Thief and decided to switch up to Bard (which was my original intention until I realized that this might mean he was too high of an "effective level" to continue to be a protege—even though he'd have nowhere near the same amount of Experience)?

But.. I would like to say that I think it should be the same rule regardless of what it is used for. Tournaments, honor, or anything else not rearding the class abilities...

And when you look at EPs earned.. most of the time a Multi class will ahve the same EPs total between all classes as another single class character will at 1 level higher than the Multi class characters highest level.

I think basing honor off of 1 level higher per Extra class is a good way to go as it does represent the characters "experience"

And I do think Dual class should follow the same method... especially since a multi or Dual class character gains quite a bit of benefit over a single class character that is only 1 lvl higher than his highest level class. It is a matter of Balance.

"Effective Level" is an HMA thing instituted for tournament balance (a table full of Multi-class characters (7/7 or 7/7/7) would otherwise have an unfair advantage against even a table of all 7th level single class characters). It is not, to the best of my knowledge, found anywhere else in HackMaster (except for some classes and spell casting, etc). Honor is a HackMaster RPG rule. That is the difference.

So, by this argument a 9th level Thief, a 7th level Cleric, an 8th level Magic-User, and a 6th level Berserker should all have exactly the same Honor window? (They could be those levels based on each having approximately 115,000 experience points)

Um... no. Level is the factor here, not experience. How well they are respected in their class.

Quite the opposite. Higher level characters have an easier time maintaining great honor through leveling. The advantage of a multi-class character is that he has more opportunities to change honor (positive or negative). A well-played character will soon be looking for things to burn honor on.

Consider the matter settled
(unless I am over-ruled by a level 10 GM and/or Don Morgan).

__jtolman__

__Topher__
From my perspective, it really isn't complicated. There are simply two different standards by which a character's level is measured. In game situations, a character's honor is based upon the level of his highest class. Period. Pretty simple. (This is also the measurement used to determine if a protégé can still be apprenticed to a particular mentor.)

For tournament qualification purposes a character's "effective level" is the highest level achieved + (number of classes - 1).

In the first situation, it is a matter of measuring a character against himself. In the second, it is a means for achieving fairness in tournaments, which is not a part of the actual HackMaster rules at all. Within the rules there is only one way to calculate a character's level. (The other calculations are for determining party alignment, fame, or honor, which is a completely different beast and has nothing to do with calculations for an individual character.)

Cmurder
So what's a multi classed character's actual level?
Example 7/7 MU cleric half-elf?

Topher
It is the level of his highest class. In this case, since he is 7th level both as a magic-user and a cleric, his level is considered to be 7th level. (For tournament qualification purposes, it would be 8th level [level of his highest class 7 + (number of classes 2 - 1 ) = 8].)

Topher
Just to make it absolutely clear, I have this tagged for my next errata submission, but I have a feeling the Dwarf might piggyback this question on the batch currently under review.

Foundry_Dwarf
I already submitted it and received an answer: "At one time I think I used the character's highest level, but now I'd say that Honor should be calculated in the same fashion for group or individual, so this 5/6 guy would use the level 9 row for individual Honor.

Topher
Multi-class and Dual Class Honor: Multi-class and dual class characters determine their level for honor purposes by adding their highest level and half of the levels in their other class(es), rounded up. For example, a fighter/magic-user of level 6/5 would be considered to be 9th level (6 + 5/2 = 8.5 rounded up to 9).

How do you roll a d1000?

Rahidredneck
In all the player advantage books, the beginning education charts all end with a d1000 chart, but I can't find any info on how you roll that. Is it a d100*10 or a 10d100? Or what do you all do, aside from owning a giant fricking 1000 sided die.

blackstone
Here's how it is done:

Use 3 d10s. One for hundreds, one for tens, one for ones. So if you rolled a 4, 5, 2 it reads 456 on a d1000 chart.

For d10,000, just add one more d10 for the thousands place.

Question on Quirks and Flaws: PHB vs. Class Books

Bobby_Shandy
If class is selected after Quirks & Flaws are determined (as indicated in Appendix I of PHB), then how do the revised/expanded Q&F tables in books like the Combatant's Guide ever come into play?

Because they like the random elements, my players usually don't have a class in mind until after they've garnered Build Points through the Priors & Particulars process anyway, so the easy solution of just having them pick a class earlier in character creation isn't that appealing. And the class-specific Flaws seem to be more injurious than the general ones presented in the PHB, so there's little incentive for them to settle on a class until after they've determined Quirks & Flaws.

dungeonmaster
Once you elect to use the Q&F tables from the class books you are bound to choose a character of that class or subclass. In the case of demi-humans who multi-class, at least one class must come from the classbook.

stevarooni
Well, one of the multiple classes must be of the class type from that classbook type.

dungeonmaster
To further elaborate:

If you roll on the CG & ZG tables your character must be a fighter/cleric or fighter/cleric/?. I use
fighter and cleric to refer to the subclasses if those subclasses are allowed to multi.

**Question on Multi-Class and Build Points**

*UberHacksalot*

Been searching the PHB Errata and Forums and can't find any where listing how Class BPs work for Multi-Classing.

*baakyocalder*

Take the BP total from the class which gets the most BPs of your chosen classes. For multi-class characters you average hit points and attribute increase rolls, but take the better BPs, weapon proficiencies, armor choices, and savings throws.

**Question on hurled/thrown weapons**

*Brave_Sir_Robin*

If I am reading the PHB correctly (and I'm probably not) when a PC uses a thrown/hurled weapon, like a dart for example, both his Strength & Dexterity ability scores modify his to-hit?

So if a PC has a 14/23 Str and 16/06 Dex, his total to-hit with a thrown/hurled weapon would be +4. His damage bonus would be +2.

Am I doing this right?

*Dude*

No. You apply your missile adjustment from Dex and damage adjustment from Strength on a thrown weapon.

*jtolman*

no.. only the Dex modifies the To hit- this is clarified in the GMG... though with hurled weapons Str does add to it's damage.

**Questions on starting attributes**

*Balance*

I have this player who dies alot. And constantly makes new characters. His latest craze is burning most of his attributes to get one attribute to 23 or 24...

Can races start with above their defined maxes? (Just before class selection)

*Jones*

Yup, sure can. It will often mean the character will die a lot. But that's ok.

The racial minimums and maximums are only for initial race selection. After that anything goes (except for some rules around taking them below 3 which I can't remember cos I've never done it).

*Dude*

Flip to Appendix I in the PHB (page 341).

Step 4 is where you pick your race. At that moment in time, you have to meet the Ability Prerequisites for Demi-human Characters (Table 2A, page 23).

After step 4, you can crank up the ability scores to as high as you can afford in step 8.

Note that you can only "burn" ability scores (2 for 1) in step 3.

*Chuck*

High stats won't typically make a character invicible, especially if it means all the other stats stink. If the character is a nuisance, create situations that will call for ability checks in the stats he's dragged down to low levels. That'll drive the point home right quick.

In addition to 2-for-1 stat changes, a character can elect to lower a stat by 1 to gain 2 BPs. This is good for characters who want to purchase lots of STPs, or don't know what kind of stats they want to end up with during that step...

**Question on free skills**

*Necron*

When rolling up characters there are several things that just aren't clicking for some reason.

If you take a package which includes certain skills "for free", what is the level you start with? Is it one free roll of the mastery die, automatic 51% or other?

*Imperatrix*

When a skill is obtained "for free", you get one free roll of the mastery and honor die. These rolls are added to the ability statistic used as the baseline for that skill, to arrive at the initial skill percentage. Some skills are based upon multiple stats, so you'd average the stats first before adding in the new die.

Example 1: Artistic Ability depends upon both Dexterity and Intelligence, so a character who gets Artistic Ability for free gets:
(Dexterity + Intelligence) / 2 + (1 roll of Mastery Die) + (1 roll of Honor Die)

Example 2: Singing, on the other hand, depends only upon Charisma, and so is:

Charisma + (1 roll of Mastery Die) + (1 roll of Honor Die).

Note that Mastery & Honor both penetrate for skill rolls.

You get a skill free at 51% mastery if it is a prerequisite to another skill being given to you for free. For example, in the Zealot’s Guide, one of the skills a cleric can pick up during his time in the seminary is Healing (see table 2H). Healing has a prerequisite of First Aid Suite. So, the lucky player gets First Aid Suite at a flat 51% - no rolls necessary - and Healing at (Statistics + Mastery + Honor).

After the initial freebie, whether rolled or a flat 51%, all additional increments to a skill level are [(1 roll of Mastery Die) + (1 roll of Honor Die)]. You do not add the underlying ability statistic again.

LarkerWithout
Don’t forget if you take a Skill Suite, you get both a % level for the suite AND all the skills within it...

Sometimes a sub-skill of a suite will have a better mastery die...Also when you train the skill suite it trains all the sub-skills...

Question on Experience and Multiclass

Thelonius_Fringeweasel
Multiclass characters divide any special class-based EP awards by their number of classes, right? To give the specific example that came up in my game, that would mean that if a multi-classed mage/thief learns a 1st-level spell from a captured spellbook, he gets 250 EP towards his M.U. EP total, and none for his thief EP total. I'm almost certain that this is how it works, but I can’t seem to find where the rules say so. If someone could give me a page # so I can shut the player who’s whining about this up, I'd appreciate it.

Dude
Class based EP awards go the the relevant class. A Cleric/MU that gets EP from healing will have that go to his Cleric Class. This is covered in the GMG, look in the index for Experience awards. Don't have my book or I'd give you a reference.

Example:

So a Cleric/MU that gets 250 points from being elected MVP, 400 total from combat experience, and 42 from healing his friends would get the following:

\[
\frac{250 + 400}{2} = 325 \text{ base EP to each and } 42 \text{ EP to cleric}
\]

So, 325 to Magic User and 367 to Cleric. That's how I read it.

Demosthenes
I do it that way too... if a multiclassed fighter/cleric casts a buttload of healing spells, I award that character spellcasting experience points specifically to the cleric side.

It should be pointed out though that things can get lopsided if a character never does anything from one of his classes... if I recall correctly there is a rule in HM that states that there may be no more than a 2 level differential between any of a multiclass character’s classes, so that can make up for it.

That way if that aforementioned fighter/cleric does nothing but cast cleric spells and turn undead, and never engages in any melee combat or does any fighter things, he can be no more than 3rd level in cleric while he’s still a 1st level fighter. His clerical advancement simply stops until his fighter side catches up to an acceptable level.

That can be a good way to spur a player into playing the character a bit more evenly.

Questions on Proficiencies and Dual Class

Thelonius_Fringeweasel
When a human dual-classes, does he gain any proficiencies or proficiency slots from his new class? Again, to give a specific example, if my human fighter duals to ranger, does he gain four new prof. slots to fill during his ranger training? And if so, does he get to automatically fill one of those slots for free, since fighters get a free prof. at 1st level?

cynanbloodbane
He starts training in his new class and receives the normal # of starting proficiencies appropriate to his new class. He may not use his previous proficiencies without incurring experience loss, unless he uses one of his proficiencies to become proficient with it again.

The basics are:

- HP stay the same.
- Skills stay the same.
- Talents stay the same.
- Proficiencies switch to new class only.
- Class Skills switch to new class only.
- Saving throws switch to new class only.
- No new HPs are added while leveling.
- No increases in fractal ability scores when leveling up.
- A Dual-class fighter may specialise, even if fighter is his second class.
- A knight Erramat dual-classing to a fighter may specialise in a different weapon as a fighter than he specialised in as a KE, but his old specialisation is downgraded to proficiency.
- You can Dual-class to as many classes as you qualify for.
- As soon as his current class is higher than his previous class(s) HPs and Fractal ability scores start to go up again, you can access all previous class abilities and proficiencies, and you use the best of both classes saving throws.

**Question on Class Book STPs**

*CaniblCat*
Can the talents/skills from one guide book be used only by members of the classes covered therein, or are they open on anyone?

For example, could a mage use One Weapon Style to gain a +1 bonus to AC without using a shield?

Can a cleric gain the Silent Casting talent (I don't have the Zealot's guide, so I don't know if it's already there. I'm assuming it isn't) from the SSG?

*garlic*
Without the Hackjournal errata, no class can take STPs from another classes book. With the Hackjournal errata, there are some specific STPs that are more widely available than just those in that particular splatbook. Chuck wrote the article in I forget which HJ #.

*Chuck Boswell, "Focus on STPs: Clarifying the Skills, Talents, and Proficiencies of the Class Books," Hackjournal 9: 5-6.*

The answer to both of your queries is no. Advanced Single Weapon Fighting and all fighter group weapon proficiencies are restricted to the fighter class group, so a magic-user could not take it. Silent Casting is restricted to the magic-user class group. In general, assume you can only use the stuff from your class book. For the rest, you'll have to read Chuck's article or ask on a case-by-case basis.

**Question on Bow Specialization**

*cynic*
OK...I know this has been answered before, but I'm not finding it anywhere...

Are there any additional attacks per round granted by bow specialization and if so, what's the progression?

And the same question with the archer package.

*Saga*
Page 102 in the PHB. Top of the second column, second paragraph, last line. 'Bow specialists do not gain any additional attacks per round'.

*Chuck*
+2 to-hit at close range? Pshaw! How about 10BPs on Bow Bonus and get +2 to-hit at ALL ranges?

At high levels of mastery, it's okay, I guess...but not sufficient enough of a benefit to be really all that enticing. The archer package's bow benefits are much nicer, on the other hand. However, those downsides are downright NASTY.

*Phentari*
An archer can fire up to five shots per round--he just has huge penalties to his accuracy.

**Question on Readied Missile Weapons**

*Brave_Sir_Robin*
A player with a bow that is readied does not roll initiative FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF COMBAT, right? Every round thereafter, he has to roll initiative like everyone else, right?

*Sly*
If you are a missile specialist, you can fire an arrow/bolt before initiative is even rolled.
Afterwards, you shoot on the assigned initiative segment (1 if you have one attack per round, 1 and 6 if you have two attacks per round, etc).

Zorman
He is referring to getting off a missile attack before initiative even begins, which is only open to specialists. Anyone who uses a missile weapon never rolls for initiative--their firing segments are predetermined depending on whether the weapon is readied or not--for instance, a bow that is readied normally fires on segments 1 and 6(without any quick shots or attempts at extra shots), an unreadied bow on segments 5 and 10.

Learning spells belonging to multiple schools
Jones
OK, I have a DS Invoker who is barred from learning conjuring spells and has a -45% chance of learning Illusion/Phantasm spells.

He's just come across a spellbook including (I think) Phantom Steed which is Conj/Phant. Does the Conj bit stop him from learning it even though he can learn Phantasms, or does the Phantasm bit let him learn it, even though the Conj part would normally preclude it?

In other words, is a spell belonging to multiple schools treated for learning purposes as belonging to both simultaneously, or either?

Durgin
Treat it as belonging to whichever you prefer.

Foundry_Dwarf
Durgin is correct. It is possible to have a spell that is in both preferred and banned lists. Use the most favorable.

Question on PPCs in Tournaments
Loball
Are PPC's (protege's, sidekicks) allowed to play as characters in tournaments?

Is this in Da Rulez (i.e. the Tournament Guidelines or some other source of which I am unaware)? I looked in the The Tournament Policy, and saw no mention of it.

I ask because there is a low-level tournament coming up, and I don't have any PCs that are low enough level to play, and I have zero interest in playing a pre-gen.

bloodymage
I know it was ruled that PPCs can play in tournaments, but would be immediately activated as a PC and such action would not put the player over the PC/group limit of three. I can't cite chapter and verse, however.

Facen
By definition, once a PPC is activated to play at a tournament it would cease to be a Potential Player Character and would be a "regular" PC. All normal rules concerning PCs would then apply.

Foundry_Dwarf
I agree with you on this< just one little question ... can you cite the page number reference(s) from the GMG? Makes it easier to discuss it with the War College if I have sources.

Jon_Tier
Pg 155

‘When his character dies or retires from adventuring he can activate his protege and make him his next player character’

If you choose to activate yor PPC, then they become a PC (and should therefore count as one of the 3 PC's allowed per group of which you are a member).

Other than that, there is no need for a separate statement within the bylaws or tournament policy.

CEBrown
Per a strict reading of the GMG:
A PPC can be activated at any time for any purpose. At that point they cease being a PPC. So, unless the HMA or the home GM issues a special dispensation of some sort, a PPC used in a tournament is no longer a Potential Player Character but an ACTUAL one, and thus must be treated as such. There are currently no provisions to allow a character to revert from "active" to "potential" status (which, IMO there SHOULD be - the whole Protege/Sidekick thing seems derived from the Dark Suns "Character Tree" which allowed swapping out "current" for "inactive" PCs whenever either the DM or the situation called for it - I’d love to see an official ruling permitting this, so I could use my main PCs sidekick without losing her sidekick status, for example).

Topher
As you can tell, the PPC issue is an open debate. The arguments, to the best of my understanding are:

**For allowing PPCs in tournaments (and remain PPCs)**
1. Many players don't have PCs suitable for low-level adventures.
2. PPCs are allowed to gain XP through adventuring already, but this behavior is discouraged, as the main reason to have a PPC is to have a backup for a PC who dies.
3. The three character limit doesn't make sense for long-running campaigns. (In my Hack University campaign, most of the players have three active PCs already: a 7-9 good-aligned PC, an 8-12 evil-aligned PC, and a 4-7 evil-aligned PC.)

**Against allowing unactivated PPCs in tournaments**
1. If we ignore the three PC/campaign limit, too many players will create "stables" of PCs so they always have a PC optimized for a particular level of tournament.
2. Players are less attached to PPCs, so risking them in tournaments is not a big deal. If he gets killed, who cares? If he survives and gets a bunch of loot, then he's less of a burden on his mentor PC.

Me? I'm CN. As long as the PC appears to be legit and I can talk to the home GM if necessary, I'm happy either way.

**Foundry_Dwarf**
You missed a couple:

4. More availability of characters (PPCs) yields less reliance on Pregens.
5. The GMG indicates that PPCs can earn experience on little side adventures while the PCs are away, but does not indicate any other way this could happen.

**Jon_Tier**
The only ways that a PPC can be activated according to the GMG are:

1. The PC dies. (NPC section page 155)
2. The PC retires. (NPC section page 155)
3. The PPC surpasses the PC level due to the PC losing a level (level drain)The player can choose to activate the PPC in that session or they revert to NPC status. (Protege section at the front - don't have my books right now)

If the PPC surpasses the PC level then the PPC goes off on their own and becomes an NPC. (currently without the option to activate AFAIK)

I would be against the use of PPC's in tournaments unless they became activated as PC's. Sorry if i wasn't clear on that FD.

**Dunkelza**
Heck, it's actually the home GM who ultimately activates or not. Why don't we just leave it up to the GM? As a tournament organizer, we don't really even need to care whether it's a PPC or not. If the home GM gets a tournament note back from us saying this character was played and earned this much XP, gp, etc., it's his problem, not ours.

Admittedly, I'm all for it because I think I'll have an easier time running tournaments if people have more chance to bring a home character of some sort.

**Loball**
OK, there are two related questions here:
1) Can PPCs be used in tournaments (which is what this thread is about), and
2) Can PPCs be played without losing their PPC status, either in home games or in tournaments, which is a separate issue.

It sound to me like there used to be two camps - one that said, "no, PPCs can never be used in tournaments", and the other that said, "yes, they can."

**leij106**
p20, under the para starting "One caveat of funneling" does state that in the event that the PC & PPC (refering to Proteges) are equally in level, the Protege will feel he can no longer learn from the PC ("sense his superiority over his former mentor."). This can only be reverted if the PC gains 2 levels over that of the PPC.

I didn't see anything specifically stating choosing to activate the PPC outside of if the PC retires, that session, the player has to decide if activating the Protege, otherwise it's permanently an NPC (same para as above).

I would say that yes, a player has the ability to activate a PPC as a PC, UNLESS that specific PPC was NPC created under GM rule, then it's up to the home GM to decide the fate of the PPC/NPC. Once the PPC has been activated, as long as the two levels difference is established (per the GMG
as mentioned above), that PPC could continue remaining as a PPC. The GMG in an earlier paragraph specifically demonstrates using a PPC (Hulick) in combat along side of a PC (Tingar) to gain not only his share, but also getting some EP funneled from the mentor. Why would the PPC not be allowed to venture on his own to go be his own hero while his Mentor is crawling around in the sewers?

**Question on Simulcasting**

*jtulman*
If a Battle mage is hit while casting a spell he may roll agains this inteligence to not be disrupted.

My question is then, if the Battle mage is Simul-casting, does he just roll once against his int for the hit, or does he need to roll once for each spell he is casting per hit.
I.e. he is casting 4 spells and is hit. does he roll once and if failed loses all the spells, or does he roll 4 times, once for each spell, and only loses the spells he fails on.

*IhsanHACK*
I would play the hardline, make as many checks as spells, and if you fail one they all fail.I would play the hardline, make as many checks as spells, and if you fail one they all fail.

*CEBrown*
Roll for the lowest-level (arguably the easiest) spell first (if levels are the same, go for shortest casting time; if those match too, determine randomly). If failed, all castings fail for the round. If passed, roll for the second spell; if it fails, the first spell went off but every other spell attempted is lost. Repeat until a failure results or all spells go off successfully.

*Endronen*
Although I'd rather make my player roll for each one just to watch him squirm, I'd say a single roll.

The very fact that they are casting simultaneously (as opposed to two spells in rapid succession) suggests an intertwining of the motions, words, etc. In a sense they are casting a single spell with multiple effects.

So either all the spells go off or none of them do based on that one roll (and I'd apply the same rule for mishaps.)

On a related note, from my research there are no rules for mishaps and simul-casting either. If there are, I'd say both conditions (disruption and mishap) should be handled the same way.

I would change my mind if there are ANY conditions that make one specific spell more likely to have a mishap/disruption than another. As far as I know, there are no such penalties. Penalties apply to spells in general, not particular spells.

*Greymarch2000*
Yeah, I'd say single roll too. Either he's distracted, or he's not.

*Topher*
One hit (or distraction) = one INT check

Success means casting continues, failure means all are disrupted.

**Question on Weapon Sizes**

*mkendall*
A character cannot use a weapon two size categories larger than his own size category. Good.

The boomerang is a Tiny weapon (Goods & Gear) and medium "creatures" use boomerangs, (Apologies to any aboriginal peoples reading this,) so it would seem that medium characters can use Tiny weapons.

What about Large characters? Can they also use Tiny weapons? Should the boomerang be errata'd to a small weapon? Should boomerangs be an exception to medium characters using Tiny weapons? Did my eyes simply slip down one line when scanning across the page?

*leif106*
I smell an errata on the Boomerang size. Even the darts from PHB are S sized.

I would use common sense. A PF rapier for instance wouldn't be usable as a melee weapon, but might make a good dart.

*edgelett*
Obviously the person who wrote that entry has never seen a real boomerang.

They actually come in a LARGE VARIETY of sizes, from small to large.

See here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boomerang

*mkendall*
Arx pointed me to page 118 of the PHB:

A character can always wield a weapon equal to his own size or less.

Add to this that a weapon is considered Tiny up to two feet in length, my initial concern, the lower limit of weapon size by character size, has been alleviated.

Question on Fame

Greymarch2000
Okay, my PCs are starting to get to level 4 or so, and the Knight Errant player's been hounding me on this, so:

Just how the hell do the rest of you run Fame?

It seems to be oddly worded, and I'm not grasping it. On one hand, it seems to be a derived value from you level and Honor, which changes as your level and honor changes.

Yet there are also Fame rewards from certain actions.

So if someone gets a +1 Fame from having Minstrels sing about them, is this then lost when Fame is recalculated next game? Or should I be keeping separate track of the any bonuses they may have, and they will have that +1 from now on?

The party just finished a pretty high profile quest for the Church of Benyar, and I'd think that it would garner them some Fame, especially the spontaneous resurrection of the Paladin (coupon), but if it just gets lost the next time he levels, what's the point?

blackstone
Treat the Fame bonus as you would with a weapon: i.e. a +1 weapon adds its bonus to the roll and damage, the +1 Fame bonus from minstrels is added to the CURRENT Fame for the PC/group.

then again, I could be wrong.

LurkerWithout
That's how I always run it. I track the Fame bonuses I give out and let the players calculate their own base fame from level, honor (and celebrity parents sometimes)...

Topher
My formula is:

\[(\text{Level} \times \text{Honor}) / 10 + \text{Additional Fame Awards}\]

So, if your 6th level fighter has an honor of 70 and got 5 fame points awarded to him for saving the city from a horde of giants, he'd have a 47 Fame. (Obviously multi- or dual-class level is calculated in this case using the honor formula, not the tournament formula.)

It seems like blackstone and Lurker both run it the same way.

stevarooni
Is this "Additional Fame Awards" a constant that remains through the career, then? That is, would the bonus fame for saving a town at 2nd level apply to this 6th level fighter?

Topher
In my game additional Fame awards (anything in the Adding to Fame section on GMG p. 62) persist, as I didn't see anything that indicates that they should ever go away.

Greymarch2000
Do you keep separate Fame/Infamy scores? Or have events of "Infamy" (burning down an orphanage) take away from a character's Fame, while acts of "Fame" (constructing an orphanage) would give positives?

Topher
I haven't had the need to track them separately. I look at Fame/Infamy as one stat; Fame for good/neutral PCs, Infamy for evil PCs. I can't see any acts causing a loss of Fame bonus points, as the positive events still happened. Most of those instances should cause a loss of base honor, which would affect the Fame formula.

Greymarch2000
So a Knight Errant would be \([(\text{Honor}/10*\text{level}) + \text{bonuses}] \times 1.5 \) right? Or \([(\text{Honor}/10*\text{level}) \times 1.5 + \text{bonuses}] \) I'm thinking the former. (Assuming I'm right in remembering it's x1.5)

leif106
According to p52 of the PHB, it's 1.25 for a KE. Celebrity parents (p78) is 1.5.

But yes, the fame factor would be after the bonuses.

Questions on Specialty Spells For Double Specialists/Sole Practitioners
CEBrown
Yesterday I was going back through the Spellslinger's guide and re-read the Double Specialist section; that led me to re-read the Sole Practitioner's section.

I'd running these wrong - ONLY the First Level spell slots get doubled; everything else is "straight up" apparently. Is this correct? Has anyone else been giving them doubled slots for all levels or was it just me?

fathead
My interpretation had been that they study spells in their school as though they were one level lower (3rd level spell in a 2nd level spell slot), except 1st level spells, in which they can study either one 2nd level in a 1st level spell slot, or two 1st level spells in one 1st level spell slot.

Geekbert
My understanding is that only first-level spells get the 2-for-1 benefit, and the bonus spell doesn't count for that (i.e. you can take either a 1st or 2nd-level spell at L1 from within your area of Sole Practice.) Beyond that, it's an either-or deal: 2nd-level spells can occupy first or second-level spell slots, 3rd-level spells can occupy 2nd or 3rd, etc.

CEBrown
That is literally what the classes both say - I'd misread it the other two times I read through that section (and was wondering if anyone else had, more than anything else).

That's per the errata; the book implies that it does at one point and doesn't at another - though it seems odd to me that you CAN put a second level spell in the bonus slot but can't double it; IMO either that slot should ONLY be for a first-level spell, or it should be a "standard" slot.
But I don't write the rules...

Fortunately this only affects one thing I've written and my Icer isn't quite high enough to have any second level slots, so I haven't broken the rules on this significantly yet...

Greymarch2000
You can only double a first level spell. You can memorize a second level spell in a first level spell slot. It's still a second level spell though.

leif106

The way it's written, all in school spells are one level lower, so 1st level spells are treated as 0 level and therefore eligible for the 2-for-1 trade. A 2nd level Evocation spell for a DS Invoker would only be usable in a 1st level spell slot. I guess at that point, if/when a DS gets access to 9th spells, are they only usable for out of school spells?