

# D&D Next Playtest Update

March 20, 2012

Welcome to the latest version of the D&D Next playtest! This version contains many revisions inspired by playtest feedback over the past few months.

In the playtest, you are looking at portions of the game, not the whole thing. Because of that fact, you might find things in the rules that are unclear or that refer to elements of the game that aren't yet in the playtest. Please let us know through our surveys what works, what doesn't work, what you don't like, and what you like.

## Using This Material

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If you are a player, here is the recommended order for reading the playtest packet's documents:

1. **How to Play.** The rest of the playtest packet assumes you are familiar with this document, which presents the basics of play.
2. **Character Creation.** This document guides you through creating a character and points you to the packet's other player-focused documents: Races, Classes, Backgrounds and Skills, Specialties and Feats, Equipment, and Spells.

If you are a Dungeon Master, here is the recommended reading order:

1. **How to Play.** The rest of the playtest packet assumes you are familiar with this document, which presents the basics of play.
2. **DM Guidelines.** A mix of DMing advice and rules, this document includes the nuts and bolts of setting DCs and crafting combat encounters.
3. **Bestiary.** Containing a selection of low-level monsters, this document gives you enough creatures to try out encounter building.

## General Rules

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Many areas of the rules have been clarified or expanded. Here are some of the highlights.

**Actions:** Three actions have been revised: coup de grace, grapple, and use an item. Two actions have been cut: disarm and push. Both of those options are now handled by feats.

**Conditions:** Some of the game's conditions have been revised: blinded, deafened, ethereal, and stunned.

**Tasks and Skills:** The section on ability scores has been revised to feature common tasks associated with the abilities. These tasks form the basis for the skills in the game, the rules for which have been revised.

**Skill Die:** The progression of the skill die has been modified. Additionally, the option is now present to gain new skills, instead of increasing your skill die.

**Two-Weapon Fighting:** Two-weapon fighting has been updated to better balance it against other fighting styles.

**Death and Dying:** The death and dying rules have been revised to make them easier to use and understand.

**Other Revisions:** A variety of other rules have been clarified and revised: the rules for reactions, ranged attacks, attacking an unseen target, taking a long rest, and pushing, dragging, or lifting a heavy load.

## Classes

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**Martial Damage Dice:** Martial damage dice and the martial damage bonus have been removed in the barbarian, cleric, fighter and rogue. The Deadly Strike class feature replaced the martial damage bonus, and the fighter retained a feature similar to martial damage dice.

**Barbarian:** The Rage damage bonus has been clarified to only function once per turn, preventing stacking the damage bonus when two-weapon fighting. Rage also now requires the

barbarian to attack a hostile creature to continue his or her rage.

**Cleric:** Many Channel Divinity options have been revised (including Divine Shelter, Restore Health, and Turn Undead). Several deity-specific weapon proficiencies have been revised to better match the deity. Religious Knowledge has been revised to function better alongside the skill system.

**Druid:** The druid is now in the playtest.

**Fighter:** The fighter has received a major revision in this packet. In addition to the Deadly Strike revision, fighters now receive expertise dice, which refresh during a short rest, giving the fighter the ability to do exceptional things in combat. Some former maneuvers have been integrated into the class features that make use of the expertise die system. Other former maneuvers have become feats. The fighter now gains bonus feats to allow the class to gain the benefits of both the expertise system and new actions from feats. The fighter has also gained the Multiattack class feature, allowing the class to attack multiple targets with a single action.

**Monk:** The monk has received some revisions similar to the fighter's, including moving some maneuvers into the feats system. Please note that this monk is in transition and will receive further revision in a subsequent release.

**Paladin:** The paladin is now in the playtest.

**Ranger:** The ranger is now in the playtest.

**Rogue:** The rogue's Skill Mastery class feature has been folded into the Rogue Schemes, and many revisions have been made to what a scheme now gives a rogue. Additionally, all rogues now get Sneak Attack. The rogue also receives several new class features. Many former skill tricks have become feats, and a rogue can gain them easily through bonus feats.

Please note that, like the monk, the rogue is in transition and will receive further revision in a subsequent release.

**Wizard:** The wizard's Wizardly Knowledge feature has been revised to function better with the skill system. The wizard has also received a new class feature, Arcane Recovery.

## Spells

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**New Spells:** New spells have been added to support the druid and the ranger. The game's other spellcasters have gained new spells as a result.

**Cantrips:** Cantrip damage has been revised to scale more appropriately with weapon damage.

**Casting Times:** Spells now include a casting time. This packet also introduces the swift spell, a replacement for the Word of Power rule previously found in the cleric.

**Other Revisions:** Many spells have had minor revision to their damage, and a number of clarifications have been made to the spellcasting rules.

## Specialties and Feats

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**Feat Categories:** Feats now fall under one of four categories: general feats, expert feats, martial feats, or magic feats. These categories have no rules of their own, but are referred to by other parts of the game.

**Additions:** Many of what were once maneuvers and skill tricks have become feats.

**Benefit Revisions:** Many feats have revised benefits.

## Equipment

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**Revised Statistics:** Several weapons have received revisions to their statistics.

**Weapon Properties:** The ammunition property has been added, and three properties have been revised: loading, mounted, and special.

**Thieves' Tools:** New rules have been implemented for Thieves' Tools, requiring proficiency to use them to disable traps and open locks.

## Magic Items

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**Consumables:** Consumable magic items are more clearly labeled, and the effects of using a consumable item have been clarified.

# DM Guidelines

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**Task Revisions:** The document's description of tasks has been revised to match the tasks listed in the "How to Play" document. Sample DCs have been provided for common uses of those tasks.

**Combat Encounter Guidelines:** XP values to determine combat encounter difficulty have been adjusted.

## Monsters

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**Monster XP:** A new method for calculating monster XP has been implemented, which should result in more accurate XP values. All monsters have had their XP recalculated to account for this new method and the new math for player characters.

**Monster Development:** Many monsters have been revised to improve their use in play.

## Looking to Playtest More?

This playtest packet contains several adventures that use monsters from the bestiary. These adventures can supply hours of playtesting content. However, please note that some of the adventures have not been updated in several months, and might require minor adjustments. Here are the adventures currently available:

- *Reclaiming Blingdenstone*, level 1
- *The Caves of Chaos*, levels 1 – 3
- *Isle of Dread*, levels 3 – 7
- *The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb*, level 14

In addition, you can playtest at stores through the D&D Encounters™ official play program. Use the [store locator](#) to find a participating store near you. The current season is *Against the Cult of Chaos™*, and next season, *Storm over Neverwinter™*, starts April 10. That season is intended for characters levels 4 – 6.