

D&D[®] Frequently Asked Questions

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About the FAQ

If you have a question about the D&D game rules, you may find them within this FAQ. Any new additions or major corrections in a version are provided in red text for your convenience. Red text changes to black text in the next version.

This version of the D&D FAQ uses the 3.5 revision of the core rules and also contains questions covering material from a variety of books (such as *Savage Species* and *Epic Level Handbook*). If you haven't yet adopted the revision, don't worry—in the rare instance that the answer is different between 3rd edition and the 3.5 revision, we'll bring it to your attention with a call out that says "Revision Alert." If you have a question that isn't answered here, please contact custserv@wizards.com and ask away! You can also contact the Sage, Skip Williams, by writing to him at these handy locations:

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We will be updating this FAQ over time, and each version will have a date stamp on it so that you know which version you have.

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Character Races and Classes

We start off the Character Races and Classes section with general questions about races, classes, levels, terms, and so on. As more questions are added to the section, subsections will be added.

Okay, I'm confused by the current alphabet soup of abbreviations dealing with exactly how tough a monster or a character is. What are character level, class level, EL, ECL, and CR? How do they relate to each other? Are they interchangeable? If not, what are they used for?

The terms are not interchangeable. You can find definitions of most of these terms in the *Player's Handbook* glossary or in *Savage Species*, but here's an overview.

Class Level: The total number of levels you have in a particular class. A 5th-level fighter has 5 class levels in fighter. A 5th-level fighter/5th-level wizard has 5 class levels in fighter and 5 class levels in wizard. Class level affects so many things it would be tedious to list them all in detail. The most important include number of Hit Dice (1 per class level), base attack bonus, base saving throw bonuses, and number of skill points, all as shown in the description for the class. If a class gives you bonus feats, it's your class level that determines when you get them.

In addition, most level-based variables for a class feature depend on your class level, as does any level-based variable for a spell you cast as a member of that class. Powers from clerical domains are class features, and any level-based variables they have depend on your level in the class that gives you access to the domain.

Character Level: The total number of class levels you have in all your classes, plus any racial Hit Dice you have. A human 5th-level fighter/5th-level wizard has 10 character levels. An ogre 5th-level fighter/5th-level wizard has 14 character levels (because it has 4 racial Hit Dice). Character levels determine when you gain feats and ability score increases (see Table 3–2: Experience and Level-Dependent Benefits in the *Player's Handbook*). Any feat you get by virtue of your character level is in addition to any bonus feats from your class levels.

In addition, your character level determines how much experience you earn when you defeat a foe and how many experience points you need to gain your next class level.

Effective Character Level (ECL): Effective character level is character level plus the level adjustment for the character's race. Races that are more powerful than the standard races in the *Player's Handbook* have level adjustments to help promote some equity among the player characters in a campaign, and to help DMs decide how much danger a party containing members of those races can actually handle. For example, a dwarf has a level adjustment of +2. Many people (and even one or two rulebooks) say "ECL" when they really mean "level adjustment."

Use the character's ECL to determine starting equipment and how the character earns and benefits from experience, as noted on page 5 of *Savage Species*. Use the actual character level for everything else.

Encounter Level (EL): Encounter Level is strictly a tool for the DM to use when deciding if a particular encounter is too easy, about right, or too hard for a particular group of characters. It has no real effect on play. Some people think that Encounter Level determines how much experience characters

gain from an encounter, but that's not so (read on).

Challenge Rating (CR): Challenge Rating reflects a game designer's best judgment about how tough a monster will prove in a fight. The CRs of all the creatures in an encounter help to determine the encounter's EL (see Chapter 4: Adventures in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). When characters defeat a creature, its CR determines the basic experience award, which in turn is adjusted according to the party's character levels or ECLs (see Chapter 7: Rewards in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

It is perhaps unfortunate that an NPC who belongs to a standard *Player's Handbook* race has a CR equal to her character level, because it implies that CR, character level, and ECL are the same. They aren't—CR and character level just happen to have the same values sometimes. CR and ECL have nothing to do with each other, because they measure two different things. See the next question.

I have been flipping through *Savage Species*, and I have become confused about the use of ECL. Would a 1st-level mind flayer wizard be an appropriate challenge for a party of 16th-level characters or for a party of 8th-level characters?

Effective character level (ECL) is a measurement of a character's impact as a player character in a campaign, and that is usually quite different from how dangerous it is as an NPC during a single encounter.

To determine the challenge your example character presents, ignore ECL and use the rules for determining NPC Challenge Ratings in Chapter 7: Rewards of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The example character has a CR of 9 (base CR of 8 for a mind flayer, +1 for its character level). All by itself, the example character is a challenge for a party of four 9th-level player characters.

The example character's ECL, however, is a whopping 16 (racial HD 8 + character level 1 + level adjustment 7).

Why the difference?

It has to do with the impact the character would have on a campaign as an ongoing PC, as opposed to the much lower impact it has during a single encounter (which is what CR measures). A party of four 9th-level PCs can reasonably expect to dispatch the mind flayer wizard NPC in a few rounds. As a player character, however, the mind flayer is much more powerful, since it uses its *mind blast*, psionics, and deadly tentacles against a succession of foes, encounter after encounter, adventure after adventure.

When is a monster character considered epic level? Do you "go epic" when your total class levels equal 20 or when your total Hit Dice equal 20? Is a monster character eligible for epic-level feats (such as Epic Toughness) when its character level is 21+ or when its ECL is 21+?

A monster becomes an epic-level character when its character level hits 21, just like any other character. A monster's character level is equal to its racial Hit Dice + class levels. (See the second sidebar on page 25 of the *Epic Level Handbook*.)

A creature's ECL has no effect on when it becomes an epic character, although once it becomes an epic character, its ECL continues to affect how much experience it earns and when it can add a new level.

A player of mine wants to create a minotaur character. The average party level is 15. He says he can just make a 1st-level barbarian/14th-level fighter minotaur and be equal to the other player characters. I say he can only have a 7th-level character (say 1 barbarian level and 6 fighter levels) because of the minotaur's ECL of 8 (8 minotaur + 1 barbarian + 6 fighter = 15th level). Who's right?

You're on the right track. You've figured out the right number of class levels the character can have, but a minotaur has 6 racial Hit Dice and a +2 level adjustment. Your example minotaur character does have an ECL of 15 (6 HD, 7 class levels, and a +2 level adjustment), but it is a 13th-level character with skill points, base saves, feats, and ability score increases as a 13th-level character. The minotaur character starts with 15th-level equipment, however, and earns experience as a 15th-level character.

The text for level adjustments on page 11 of *Savage Species* says that if the monster gains multiple attacks in a single round before a fighter of equal level, or if the attacks deal more damage than a one-handed martial weapon, then this is a level adjustment of at least +1. By "multiple attacks," do you mean two claws, or two claws and a bite, such as the Multiattack feat requires? Say a monster has two claws, each dealing 1d4 points of damage. Would that still be a +0 level adjustment, since the two claws do not exceed the damage a longsword can deal?

Having more than one natural attack gets you a +1 level adjustment (no matter how much damage those natural weapons can deal) if a fighter of equivalent level does not have as many attacks. If you have one natural weapon that deals more damage than you could deal with a one-handed simple or martial weapon (more than 1d8 for a Medium creature), you also have a level adjustment of at least +1.

Do anthropomorphic felines lose their pounce abilities?

Yes; see the Special Attacks entry on page 215 of *Savage Species*.

I was reading *Savage Species*, and its discussion of caster level confused me with the example of a young gold dragon. If you are a young gold dragon, you have spells as a 1st-level sorcerer and can also pick clerical spells (and some spells from some domains) and cast them as arcane spells. Suppose you then take 3 levels in sorcerer. *Savage Species* explains that you derive spells per day, spells known, and caster level from the sum of your caster level as a dragon (1st) plus your caster level as a sorcerer (3rd), so you are a 4th-level caster. My question is regarding the cleric spells you can learn as arcane spells. Can you take 2nd-level cleric spells and cast them as arcane spells because you are a dragon? Also, is your caster level for the cleric spells you can cast as a dragon 4th or 1st? Can the dragon cast any cleric spell as an arcane spell? What about monsters that cast spells as clerics? What would happen if the dragon added cleric levels?

When a dragon, or any other creature that can cast spells as a sorcerer, adds sorcerer levels, those levels stack when determining how the character casts sorcerer spells.

The example dragon casts spells as a 4th-level sorcerer. The dragon's innate caster level doesn't stack with its sorcerer levels for other class features. If the example dragon has a familiar, the familiar has abilities from a 3rd-level master as shown in Table 3-19: Familiar Special Abilities in the *Player's*

Handbook.

A dragon that can cast cleric spells as arcane spells casts such spells as though they were part of the sorcerer class list. If the example dragon wanted to cast *cure moderate wounds*, it would have to choose *cure moderate wounds* as one of the 2nd-level spells it knows. It would cast the spell as a 4th-level caster (and heal 1d8+4 points of damage when casting it). It cannot simply cast any 1st- or 2nd-level cleric spell.

If the example dragon adds a level of cleric, it would cast sorcerer spells as a 4th-level sorcerer (including any cleric spells it has added to its list of spells known) and would prepare and cast cleric spells and turn undead as a 1st-level cleric. When preparing cleric spells, it could choose any 1st-level cleric spell, just as any other 1st-level cleric could.

If you make a character with the reptilian template and the base creature is a human, do you still get the extra feat and extra 4 skill points at 1st level, or do you lose these due to the benefits gained from the template? I suppose this applies to any template.

When applying any template, treat racial traits as special qualities. If a template says the new creature retains the special qualities of the base creature, then any racial traits also are retained. Humans retain their extra feats and skill points, elves retain their skill bonuses and weapon proficiencies, dwarves retain their saving throw bonus, and so on. Thus, when you apply the reptilian template to a human, the base creature retains its human racial traits: an extra feat and 4 extra skill points.

How do racial Hit Dice factor into the computation of a multiclass character's uneven class and a favored class? Are they ignored completely? For example, a thri-kreen has 2 racial Hit Dice (thus 2 levels of the thri-kreen monster class) and has a favored class of ranger (as listed in *Savage Species*). If a thri-kreen character wished to take rogue class levels, would this cause an automatic -20% experience point penalty when the 4th level of rogue was taken because of the existing 2 levels of thri-kreen?

Ignore racial Hit Dice completely when calculating experience penalties for multiclass characters. The example character has no experience penalty.

In looking over the ogre mage class in *Savage Species*, I noticed that regeneration is listed twice in the class advancement chart. Is there a separation of what abilities the ogre mage derives from advancement? The text on the regeneration class feature doesn't say if the character gains all the abilities of regeneration at 6th level (for example reattaching limbs) or at 11th level. Help!

At 6th level an ogre mage has regeneration 1; at 11th level an ogre mage has regeneration 2, just as shown on the class chart.

That is, an ogre mage character regenerates 1 hit point per round starting at level 6, and 2 hit points per round starting at level 11. Starting at 6th level, an ogre mage character gets all the general benefits of regeneration, including the ability to reattach or regrow organs and limbs.

In the previous version of the D&D game, having levels in a prestige class never caused you to pay the experience penalty for being a multiclass character without uneven class levels. (The prestige class levels didn't count when checking to see if you had a penalty.) The section on

prestige classes in the new *Dungeon Master's Guide* no longer mentions that you don't suffer an experience penalty for having levels in a prestige class. Is this a change or an error?

It's an error. Having levels in a prestige class won't give you an experience penalty.

Druid

The druid's wildshape ability is described as being like the *polymorph* spell except when noted otherwise. The *polymorph* spell description says you can assume the form of an animal with 1 Hit Die per caster level, up to 15 Hit Dice. The wildshape ability states that you cannot assume a shape with more Hit Dice than your druid level. Further, a 20th-level druid can assume the form of a huge elemental, which has 16 Hit Dice. So my question is: Is the 15-HD limit from the *polymorph* spell completely removed for a wildshaping druid and is limited only by the druid's level?

Yes, use the wildshaping druid's level as the limit of Hit Dice for the assumed form, as noted in the wildshape description, instead of the 15-HD limit for the spell. Don't forget to observe the wildshape ability's limits on the types of forms that the druid can assume as well as the assumed form size, both of which also vary with the druid's class level.

When you add Hit Dice to a druid's (or ranger's) animal companion as the master's level goes up, does the animal get any bigger? For instance, when a druid has a wolf companion, the wolf starts out with the standard 2 Hit Dice and is size Medium. By the time the druid is 3rd level, the wolf has 2 bonus Hit Dice. According to the wolf entry in the *Monster Manual*, an "advanced" wolf with 4 Hit Dice would be Large. Is the example companion wolf also Large?

An animal companion doesn't get bigger when it adds extra Hit Dice for the master's levels. The advancement entries for creatures, and the rules for advancing monsters, refer to unusually powerful specimens that are simply tougher (and perhaps bigger) than normal for their kinds.

Monk

I've been reading the new *Player's Handbook*, and I'm confused about the monk. The new monk class description says a monk gets an extra attack from the flurry of blows ability by taking -2 on all of her attacks. Additionally, she gets an additional attack at her full attack bonus at 11th level. The table for flurry attacks shows this progression through 3rd level, but then the progression breaks down. At 5th level, the monk's base attack is identical to 4th level, but her attack bonuses for her flurry attacks increase by one, and this keeps happening. Also, is the additional attack at 11th level taken at the monk's full base attack bonus? Or is it taken at base attack -2, as with the other flurry attacks? Assuming the text and not the table is to be followed, a 20th-level monk should either attack at +13/+13/+13/+8/+3 or +15/+13/+13/+8/+3. Which is correct?

All the extra attacks a monk gets as part of a flurry are at the monk's highest attack bonus, less any penalty the flurry imposes. The penalty starts at -2 at 1st level, drops to -1 at 5th level, and drops to 0 at 9th level (see the Flurry of Blows section in the monk class description). Table 3-10 in the *Player's Handbook* gives the correct attack bonus for a flurry at each level. The numbers on the table reflect both the extra attacks the monk gets from the flurry and the correct flurry

penalty (or lack thereof).

A 20th-level monk using a flurry attacks 5 times at a basic bonus of +15/+15/+15/+10/+5, just as shown on the table. A base attack bonus of +15 gives three attacks at +15/+10/+5. A flurry grants two extra attacks at the monk's highest attack bonus of +15 (for being level 11+), and there is no attack penalty for the flurry (for being level 9+).

Rogue

Can a rogue deal nonlethal damage with a sneak attack using a normal weapon if she takes a -4 penalty on her attack roll? What if the rogue tries to deal lethal damage with a normally nonlethal weapon; can she make a sneak attack then?

You cannot make a sneak attack to deal nonlethal damage with a weapon that normally deals lethal damage; see the sneak attack entry in the rogue class description. You can deal nonlethal damage with a sneak attack with an unarmed strike or if you use a weapon that normally deals nonlethal damage, such as a sap.

If you choose to deal nonlethal damage with a weapon that normally deals lethal damage, such as a sword, you're assumed to wield the weapon in a less-than-efficient manner, such as striking with the flat of the blade or swinging a blunt weapon with less than the usual force (see page 146 in the *Player's Handbook*). Such methods prevent sneak attacks, which require especially well-aimed and effective blows.

You can make a sneak attack when you use a weapon that normally deals nonlethal damage to deal lethal damage. The penalty for doing so is -4, but in this case, it represents the difficulty you have finding and hitting a vulnerable area (also see page 146 in the *Player's Handbook*). This extra exactness in your attack doesn't interfere with sneak attacks.

One of my players, who has a rogue character, was reading the rogue class description and found an explanation of a rogue using a sap or unarmed strike in a sneak attack to deal nonlethal damage. He was wondering, since a sap is a martial weapon, should it have been listed as one of the martial weapons that a rogue is proficient with, or should it actually be listed as a simple weapon? Or, is it assumed in the class description that the rogue took the Martial Weapon Proficiency (sap) feat? What happens if a rogue isn't proficient with a sap and tries to make a sneak attack with it? Do you have to be proficient with the weapon you're using to make sneak attacks?

A sap is a martial weapon and proficiency with a sap is indeed a feature of the rogue class (as noted in the *Player's Handbook* errata file).

The sap is mentioned in the sneak attack description primarily to make it clear that you can make sneak attacks with nonlethal weapons (such as saps and unarmed strikes), even though you cannot make sneak attacks when you decide to deal nonlethal damage with a weapon that normally deals lethal damage (see the previous question).

While a sneak attack requires deadly accuracy, you don't have to be proficient with a weapon to make a sneak attack with it. A rogue can suffer the -4 penalty for using a weapon with which she is not proficient and make a sneak attack. The situation here is slightly different than the one examined in the previous question. When you aren't proficient with a weapon, you have difficulty using it well, but you aren't deliberately using it in a less than optimal manner (as you are when trying to deal nonlethal damage with a lethal weapon). The two

situations both impose a penalty of the same size, but for different reasons. Note that the two penalties stack. If you're aren't proficient with a weapon that normally deals lethal damage, and you try to deal nonlethal damage with it, you suffer a -8 penalty on attack rolls.

I have a multiclass barbarian/rogue. I was wondering if he can sneak attack while raging?

Yes, provided the character's attack meets the requirements for a sneak attack—you must have the foe flanked or the foe must somehow be denied its Dexterity bonus (if any) to Armor Class against your attack. A sneak attack requires precision (see the two previous questions), but not much in the way of patience or concentration.

Skills

Are there no skills that are exclusive to certain classes in new version of the D&D game? For instance Decipher Script and Use Magical Device were exclusive to the rogue in the earlier version of the game.

Exclusive skills are a thing of the past.

How does the Disable Device skill work? Say my rogue has spotted what looks like a pressure plate. How does he go about disabling it? How can you disable a trap if you don't know what it does? Or is figuring out the trap part of disabling it?

In play, Disable Device works just like any other skill: You make a skill check and you succeed if your check result meets or exceeds the check DC; if you fail badly when attempting to disable a trap, you might trigger the trap (see the Disable Device skill description in the *Player's Handbook*).

The DM is free to decide exactly how much information you get about a trap you're trying to disable. In most cases, you'll discover just enough about the trap's workings to disable it. In the case of the pressure plate in your example, you'll discover that the plate triggers a reaction of some type if depressed, and a successful Disable Device check allows you to somehow jam the plate so that it cannot be depressed or it is otherwise rendered nonfunctional. It's best to assume that a successful Disable Device check cripples the trap in the simplest and most straightforward way possible. With a pressure plate, that probably means using some kind of wedge to keep the plate from moving. You can certainly disarm a trap in this manner without ever figuring out exactly what the trap does.

A Disable Device check does reveal a trap's workings if the check beats the Disable Device DC by 10 or more. Even so, you might not completely understand the trap's workings, but you'll know what kind of nastiness the trap can dish out and exactly where the trap dishes it out. That knowledge can allow you to bypass the trap without triggering it.

When using a Ride skill check to claim cover from your mount, exactly when do you start claiming cover from your mount? When must you stop claiming cover from your mount? The skill description says you react instantly to claim cover, and it doesn't take an action. Does that mean you can do so anytime, even when it's not your turn? The skill description says you can't attack or cast spells while claiming cover. Why is that significant if you can claim cover anytime without using an action?

You can make a Ride check to claim cover from your mount anytime, even when it's not your turn. Make the check before your opponent makes his attack roll. If your check succeeds, you have cover against your opponent's attacks. If several different opponents attack you during the same place in the initiative order, one Ride check determines if you have cover against all those attacks. If you're attacked again, you must make another Ride check to claim cover again. You cannot claim cover while you're casting a spell or making any kind of attack. So, for example, if you cast a spell while mounted, you can't use your mount as cover against any attack of opportunity you might provoke. You also cannot claim cover from your mount while making a charge attack (not even during the movement portion of your charge).

Feats

I noticed that the Ability Focus feat in *Savage Species* is listed as a general feat instead of a monstrous feat. To me, that implies that some class abilities are considered special attacks. Which qualify, if this isn't a typo?

You can use the Ability Focus feat with pretty much anything that you can use to hurt or hinder a foe and that allows a saving throw. A short list includes the monk's stunning attack, the assassin's death attack, and the bard's fascinate ability. Things that don't allow saving throws, such as sneak attacks, aren't affected.

One of the players in a campaign that I run took the Manyshot feat from the *Epic Level Handbook*. His character gets three attacks if he takes the full attack action, from a base attack bonus of +6/+1 and the Rapid Shot feat. He claims that with Manyshot he can fire six arrows as a full-round action. I say he can't, since the feat applies only to standard actions. I think that the feat allows him to fire two shots during a standard action as opposed to the usual single shot that is allowed. Does Manyshot apply to full attack as well as standard actions? I would greatly appreciate it if you could shed some light on the situation.

You're right about Manyshot. It allows the character to shoot two or more arrows as a standard action. It does not allow the character to fire two or more arrows in place of a single attack. Standard actions can't be combined with full attacks, nor are they part of a full attack.

The example character has a base attack bonus of +6; with the Rapid Shot and Manyshot feats, the character has the following options:

- Fire one arrow as a standard action (at +6).
- Fire two arrows as a standard action (at +2—the second printing of the *Epic Level Handbook* says the penalty for Manyshot is -4, not -2 as stated in the first printing).
- Fire two arrows as a full-round action (+6/+1).
- Fire three arrows as a full-round action (+4/+4/-1, with Rapid Shot)

The Improved Manyshot feat appears to have absolutely no benefit over Manyshot, and I need clarification. Manyshot has a maximum of four arrows at base attack +16 and higher. Improved Manyshot limits the number of arrows only by your base attack bonus: two arrows plus one arrow for every 5 points of base attack bonus above +6. Page 6 of the *Epic Level Handbook* says base attack bonus does not increase after level 20. That means the maximum base attack bonus any character could possibly have is +20. With a +20 base attack bonus, Improved Manyshot is still limited to four arrows.

Your epic attack bonus improves your base attack bonus for all purposes except your number of attacks with the full attack action. Add your base attack bonus and your epic attack bonus when using Improved Manyshot. If, for example, you have a base attack bonus of +20 and an epic attack bonus of +10, you can shoot six arrows as a standard action.

Suppose a character with the Improved Trip feat uses the Bluff skill to successfully feint in combat and uses his next melee attack to trip the duped opponent. It seems clear that the character ignores that opponent's Dexterity bonus to Armor Class for the touch attack to initiate the trip. Assuming that the trip attempt is successful, Improved Trip

provides an additional attack as if the character hadn't used her attack for the trip attempt. Does this mean that the character continues to ignore the tripped opponent's Dexterity bonus to Armor Class for the additional attack granted by Improved Trip feat? How do other "next attack only" effects (like the true strike spell) work with the Improved Trip feat?

In each case, the initial attack in trip attempt is the "next attack," not the extra attack that you get from the Improved Trip feat. That is, if you've made a successful feint, your foe is denied any Dexterity bonus to Armor Class when you make the initial melee touch attack to start your trip attempt, but not when you attack him after a successful trip. Likewise, if you use the true strike spell, the +20 attack bonus applies to the touch attack, not to the free attack.

The Improved Trip feat description says that you get an extra attack after a successful trip attempt "as though you hadn't used your attack for the trip attempt." That, however, is just a shorthand way of explaining what part of your normal attack routine you use for the extra attack; it's not meant to imply that you enter some kind of strange time warp when you make trip attacks.

Can other feats like Precise Shot and Rapid Shot be used in connection with Manyshot?

Precise Shot, yes; Rapid Shot, no. The latter requires the full attack action, and using Manyshot is a standard action.

When you use Manyshot, does your Strength bonus from a mighty composite bow apply to each arrow's damage?

Yes, as would the enhancement bonus from a magic bow.

Can you use Manyshot with a sneak attack? If so, do all the arrows deal sneak attack damage?

You can sneak attack with Manyshot. If you do, only one arrow in the volley deals sneak attack damage.

Is it possible to use the Shot on the Run feat in conjunction with the Manyshot feat? Some people I know insist that you must use the attack action with Shot on the Run, and they further claim that Manyshot is a standard action and not the attack action. But there isn't any such thing as an attack action, is there? The text on actions in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook* (page 138) describes many kinds of actions (standard actions, move actions, full-round actions, and free actions); it even describes things that are not actions and mentions restricted activity. Nowhere, however, do the rules describe attack actions. So, what's the correct answer?

No, you cannot use Shot on the Run and Manyshot together.

It is true that there is no category of actions called "attack actions" in the D&D game, but there is an action called attack—it's the first action described under Standard Actions on page 139 in the *Player's Handbook*.

It might seem that the folks who say no Manyshot with Shot On the Run are slicing the baloney a little thin, but the letter of the rules is on their side, and so is the intent behind the letter of the rules. The Manyshot feat description could say you fire multiple arrows with the attack action, but it doesn't.

Manyshot is a standard action, not a variant on the attack action (see the feat description on page 97 in the *Player's Handbook*).

Likewise, the Shot on the Run feat could allow you to make any kind of ranged attack while moving, but it doesn't. When using Shot on the Run, you must use the attack action with a ranged weapon (see the feat description on page 100 in the *Player's Handbook*). This rules out using spells, most magic items, or special standard actions such as the Manyshot feat when making a Shot on the Run. That's because casting a spell would require the cast a spell action (described on page 140 of the *Player's Handbook*), using any magic item except for some use-activated items would require the activate magic item action (*Player's Handbook*, page 142), and, as already noted here, using the Manyshot feat is a standard action. Most magic weapons are use activated and don't require any action to activate at all (see page 213 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), so you can use these weapons along with the attack action. For example, you could use a *+1 longbow* or *+1 arrow* (or both) with the attack action, and thus you also could use these items with Shot on the Run.

Metamagic Feats

Back in *Dragon Magazine* #308 you suggested that a sorcerer could make use of the Heighten Spell and Improved Counterspell feats to counter just about any spell. A sorcerer couldn't use any spell modified by metamagic as a counterspell, could he? A sorcerer needs a full-round action to cast such a spell, and you couldn't prepare such an action, could you?

The Sage didn't do his homework on that question and you caught him. A sorcerer needs at least a full-round action to cast any spell modified with a metamagic feat, and that makes the spell useless for counterspelling. As you point out, you can't ready a full-round action and you must ready a counterspell ahead of time.

A sorcerer can work around this problem in a couple of ways. The Spell Preparation feat from the *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting* and the old *Tome and Blood* book let sorcerers and bards prepare spells and cast them with their normal casting time, even with metamagic feats applied. The Reactive Counterspell feat from *Magic of Faerûn* allows you to counter a spell without preparing an action. A sorcerer or bard using this feat could use Improved Counterspell and Heighten Spell to counter a spell, but would need a full-round action to do so.

Equipment

Each equipment question falls into one of several categories, starting with general questions about items (including magic items), then following with specific equipment questions. Questions about specific items fall under the same subcategories that you find in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and are alphabetized by the item's name where possible.

General Equipment

The equipment section in the *Player's Handbook* says hemp rope can be burst with a successful DC 23 Strength check. Does this mean that a bound character, no matter how cleverly tied up, can simply escape by making a DC 23 Strength check? A character with a Strength score of at least 16 (+3 bonus) could do that automatically by “taking 20” on the check.

The DC to burst a single strand of rope is 23. If one is tied up, one is dealing with multiple strands of rope and not in the best position to exert leverage. Though the rope's ability to resist breakage would be a factor if someone were trying to break bonds, the skill with which the character was bound is more important.

A quick look at the Escape Artist skill description shows that escaping from bonds requires an Escape Artist check opposing the Use Rope check from whoever tied up the prisoner, and the character that tied the bonds gets a +10 bonus. If the prisoner just tries to break out through sheer Strength, add the break DC for rope (23) to the Use Rope check instead of +10.

If you use this method, it's possible (though not likely) for a truly inept captor to tie bonds that have a break DC of less than 23. That's somewhat realistic, because any knot, especially when badly tied, can weaken a rope.

To activate a spell completion or spell trigger item, the spell in the item must appear on your class spell list. How do you handle a cleric's domain spells? Most deities have three or four domains, but a cleric chooses only two of them. Are only the spells from the domains the cleric has chosen on his class spell list for the purpose of activating these items? Or are the spells for all domains associated with the cleric's deity on his class spell list? Also, which spells are on a specialist wizard's class spell list? Do all wizard spells remain on the wizard class spell list, even when the wizard has chosen a specialty and his prohibited schools?

If you're a cleric, spells from the domains you have selected are part of your class spell list. Spells from domains you could have selected, but did not, are not part of your class spell list (unless you get them on your class spell list some other way, such as by gaining another domain or adding another class).

Spells from a specialist wizard's prohibited schools are not part of his class spell list.

The section on page 159 of the *Player's Handbook* that covers using a weapon to make a trip attack says some weapons can be used for tripping, and then it lists a few weapons. Is the list the complete list of weapons that you can use to make trip attacks, or are there others? Can a character use, say, a quarterstaff to trip?

The list on page 159 is not intended to be a complete list; you can use several weapons described in Chapter 7 for trip

attacks, and new weapons get added to the game from time to time. To determine if any particular weapon is useful for tripping, read the weapon's description. If you can use the weapon to make trip attacks, its description will say so. If a weapon's description does not specifically say you can make trip attacks with it, you cannot make trip attacks with it. Weapons from the *Player's Handbook* you can use to make trip attacks are bolas, spiked chains, dire flails, heavy flails, flails, guisarmes, halberds, gnome hooked hammers, kamas, scythes, sickles, and whips.

You cannot use a quarterstaff to make a trip attack, because tripping isn't one of a quarterstaff's properties.

In the D&D game, a trip attack involves grabbing a foe and somehow yanking him off balance. All the *Player's Handbook* weapons that allow trip attacks have some kind of hook that can snag a foe or some flexible portion that you can wrap around an opponent's limb or body.

Suppose I have a weapon that is bane vs. constructs and it is not made of adamantine. If I attack an iron golem with this weapon, does the weapon bypass the golem's damage reduction? In general, will a bane weapon bypass damage reduction when you use it to attack a designated foe?

The bane property doesn't bypass damage reduction. If you hit a designated foe, however, the extra damage you deal helps you overcome any damage reduction the foe has. For example, if you have a Strength score of 16 and you hit an iron golem with a +1 *construct bane longsword*, you'll deal 1d8 +1 (base damage from the +1 sword) +2 (extra enhancement bonus against your designated foe from the bane property) +3 (Strength bonus) +2d6 (bonus damage against your designated foe). On average you'll deal 17 or 18 points of damage to the golem, which is enough to get a few points of damage past the golem's damage reduction of 15/adamantine.

You can get a host of benefits from wielding a two-handed weapon, such as 1-1/2 times your Strength bonus on damage (and twice your damage bonus from the Power Attack feat) and a +4 bonus on your opposed attack roll if someone tries to disarm you. So when is a weapon “two-handed?” For example, a lance is a two-handed weapon, right? But you can wield it in one hand when you're mounted. Since the weapons table shows that a lance is a two-handed weapon, I get all the two-handed benefits no matter how I wield the lance, right?

Wrong. Table 7-5 in the *Player's Handbook* lists weapons as light, one-handed, or two-handed strictly as a matter of convenience. These size categories are always relative to the wielder's size, as explained in some detail in the section on weapon size on page 113 in the *Player's Handbook* (also see next question).

When the combat rules speak of “two-handed” weapons, they're referring to how the weapon is being used. A Medium character using a Medium longsword in two hands is using a “two-handed” weapon. The same character using a Medium lance in one hand while mounted is using a one-handed weapon. Light weapons are an exception. If you wield a light weapon in two hands you get no advantage on damage (see page 113 in the *Player's Handbook*). Likewise, you always take a -4 penalty on your opposed roll when you're wielding a light weapon in a disarm attempt (when someone tries to

disarm you or you try to disarm someone) regardless of whether you wield it one- or two-handed.

Armor

The description of the magical bashing property for shields says it can be added only to light or heavy shields. Does this exclude shields with shield spikes? That is, can you have a +2 spiked light shield of bashing?

You can add the bashing property to a spiked shield. If you do, you use the bashing damage or the spike damage, as you prefer. The example +1 spiked light shield of bashing, if made for a Medium character, would deal 1d4 points of damage from the spike or from a bash. (Normally a light shield bash deals 1d3 points of damage, but the bashing enhancement increases that to 1d4.) If you use the spike damage, you're using a piercing weapon, and the spike has no enhancement bonus (but you could enhance the spike separately). If you use the bash, you're using a bludgeoning weapon that has a +1 enhancement.

What happens when you make a shield from adamantine or mithral? The adamantine description says you can make a shield from the metal, but there's no cost given. What is the price for an adamantine shield? What benefits do you get from an adamantine shield? Do you get damage reduction? If so, how much? What if you have an adamantine shield and adamantine armor? Does the damage reduction stack? When you make a shield from mithral, what benefits do you get? If you had a mithral heavy shield, would it have the properties of a light metal shield? (A light shield's weight lets you carry other items in that hand, although you cannot use weapons with it.) What would the damage rating be for a shield bash with a heavy mithral shield? Also, the mithral heavy shield listed on page 220 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* weighs 5 pounds, less than half of what a heavy steel shield weighs. The text for mithral on page 284 says a mithral item weighs half what a normal item weighs. Which one is correct?

An adamantine shield costs an extra 5,000 gp (the same as the extra cost for adamantine light armor). Adamantine armor gives you some damage reduction (how much depends on the kind of armor; see page 283 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) but an adamantine shield does not. An adamantine shield is always a masterwork shield, so its armor check penalty is reduced by 1 (–0 for a buckler or light shield, –1 for a heavy shield). An adamantine shield also has a hardness of 20 and one third more hit points than normal (6 for a buckler, 13 for a light shield, 26 for a heavy shield).

The basic properties of a mithral shield remain unchanged. For example, a mithral heavy shield is still a heavy shield. If you're Medium and you shield bash with a heavy mithral shield, you deal 1d4 points of damage (or 1d6 if the shield has a shield spike). You can't use your shield hand for anything else when you're using a heavy mithral shield. Any mithral item is masterwork, so a mithral shield has a lower armor check penalty, as noted above for adamantine shields. Any mithral item has a hardness of 15, but it has no extra hit points.

In general, mithral items weigh half what their normal counterparts weigh. When you find a specific listing for a mithral shield or armor, however, use the weight listed for it, not what the formula gives you. A mithral chain shirt, for example, weighs only 10 pounds (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 220), not 12 1/2 pounds (half the normal weight of 25 pounds).

Can one use a tower shield while mounted?

Nothing in the tower shield description implies that you can't use it while mounted. If you claim cover from the shield, your mount gets no benefit.

If you don't have the Tower Shield Proficiency feat, you suffer the shield armor check penalty (–10) on all your attack rolls. The tower shield description, however, says anyone using the shield as a normal shield has a –2 penalty on attack rolls. If you're not proficient with the shield, do you get the –10 penalty instead of the –2?

Penalties in the D&D game stack. Whenever you use a tower shield, you suffer a –2 on attack rolls. If you aren't proficient with the shield, you suffer the armor check penalty (–10) as well, for a total penalty of –12.

Ghost touch armor is supposed to protect you from attacks by incorporeal foes, but all these creatures have incorporeal touch attacks, and touch attacks ignore armor, so ghost touch armor is really worthless, right?

Wrong. Incorporeal touch attacks and touch attacks aren't the same thing. If they were, they would not have different names.

An incorporeal touch attack actually resembles a slam attack (battering the foe with a fist or other appendage), except that it passes through physical armor or shields. The term incorporeal touch attack simply serves as a reminder that most armor bonuses aren't effective against these attacks.

Armor and shield bonuses from force effects, such as the mage armor spell, shield spell, and bracers of armor are effective against incorporeal touch attacks, as is ghost touch armor or a ghost touch shield.

Like a ghost touch weapon, an incorporeal creature or manifested ghost can wear ghost touch armor and get an Armor Class benefit from it. Such a creature also can pass through solid objects while wearing ghost touch armor.

Weapons

Is it possible to fire a repeating crossbow with one hand like a modern semiautomatic pistol? A friend of mine says you need only one hand to fully operate a repeating crossbow, and that you could hold a repeating crossbow in each hand, firing both of them in the same round. I argued that repeating crossbows didn't work like that. Real-life repeaters were lever-action jobs invented by the Chinese. You pull back the lever with one hand while holding the crossbow with the other. The lever drew the string back and dropped another round in from the magazine. So it required two hands to operate. My friend countered that the repeating crossbow presented in the *Player's Handbook* was not based on the real weapon and instead worked on a clockwork principal with a crank-wound spring pulling back the string after each shot. The idea is preposterous (the force required to cock a crossbow is powerful indeed). Such a device would require a massive and heavy spring which would be almost impossible to wind or it would be far too weak to be effective (not to mention being heavy as heck). The description in the *Player's Handbook* does not mention any kind of spring wind system. Therefore, it must be assumed that the weapon works just like its real-life counterpart. So what is it? Is it a semiautomatic completely one-handed weapon? Or is it a simple, realistic two-handed lever-operated device? And if it is a spring-wound weapon, how many shots can it fire between windings, and how long

does it take to wind?

Ah, the joys of rules debates!

Anyone can try to shoot a heavy or light crossbow one handed as noted in the heavy and light crossbow entries in Chapter 7 of the *Player's Handbook*. As these entries point out, however, one-handed reloading is not possible.

You're right about the repeating crossbow. (So is your friend, up to a point. The game's repeating crossbow works a lot better than the Chinese original did.) The weapon has a lever (and the lever is shown in the picture of the weapon in the *Player's Handbook*), but it's a cocking/reloading lever, not a windup lever for a clockwork mechanism. Your friend ought to read the description of the weapon: You reload the crossbow by pulling the lever after each shot, and that takes two hands, also as noted in the weapon description.

The flaming burst, icy burst, and shocking burst weapon powers require a critical hit to trigger the burst. What happens when you attack a foe that isn't subject to critical hits? Will the burst power work? A flaming burst, icy burst, or shocking burst weapon also is a flaming, frost, or shock weapon, respectively. What happens when the burst power is triggered? Does the burst damage augment or replace the damage from the energy power?

A burst power has its normal effect against foes that aren't subject to critical hits. If you strike such a foe and your attack roll is good enough to threaten a critical hit, go ahead and roll to confirm the critical. If you confirm the critical, the burst power is activated, but the foe doesn't take any extra weapon damage. For example, you have a *+1 flaming burst longsword* and you hit a wight with it, rolling a 19 (good enough for a threat with a longsword). The wight is an undead creature and not subject to critical hits, but you roll to confirm the critical anyway. If you confirm the critical, the wight takes normal damage from the sword (1d8+1 points if you're a Medium character, plus your Strength modifier), not double damage as a critical hit. The sword's burst power kicks in however, dealing an extra 1d10 points of fire damage to the wight.

Damage from a burst weapon is in addition to any damage from the weapon's energy power. If the energy power is activated, you deal 1d6 points of energy damage from the energy power, plus extra energy damage from the burst power (see the power descriptions). For example, a confirmed critical hit from a *+1 flaming burst longsword* deals 1d6+1d10 points of fire damage in addition to the weapon damage from the critical hit itself.

The new descriptions for the flaming, frost, and shock weapon special abilities say that these weapons' energy effects work only on command. Why was this changed in the revision? Does that mean that their wielders must use a standard action to activate them for each attack? Or do the energy effects last awhile? If so, how long do they last? What's the chance that you burn (or freeze or shock) yourself when holding onto an activated weapon? Can you put away an activated weapon without damaging the scabbard where you store it? What happens if you have ammunition with these effects? Do you have to activate each piece of ammunition separately? What happens if you have a flaming, frost, and shock weapon? Logically, such a weapon couldn't exist, but what if it did? Would you have to activate each property separately? Finally, how does all this affect flaming burst, icy burst, and shocking burst

weapons? Do these weapons' flame, frost, and shock properties have to be activated for the burst powers to work?

The flaming, frost, and shock weapon special abilities always have been command activated; the revision just clarified that.

Activating an energy power requires a standard action, but once you activate energy power, the power works until you use another action to deactivate it. You can activate or deactivate one of these powers on up to 50 pieces of ammunition at the same time, provided that all the ammunition is in your possession, all the ammunition is the same kind, and all the ammunition has the same power.

Any attack you make with an activated weapon deals energy damage to your foe if you hit—you don't have to do anything special to deal energy damage with an activated weapon.

A burst weapon's burst power is use activated and it works even when the weapon's energy power is not activated (see the last sentence in each power's description).

The energy from a flaming, frost, shock, flaming burst, icy burst, or shocking burst weapon never harms you while you're wielding or carrying the activated weapon (see the power descriptions), and it will not harm your equipment. If you lose or set down an activated weapon, the energy it produces will harm other objects it touches, so it is best to deactivate it first.

There's nothing illogical about a flaming, frost, shock weapon (at least not within any framework that allows weapons to generate energy in the first place), and there's no rule against such weapons (think of the weapon as having fiery, frosty, shocking flames). The character creating such a weapon decides how it can be activated. Most such weapons probably are made so that the wielders can activate all three powers simultaneously, or activate them one at a time, as desired.

Do flasks of holy water hurt tieflings? Would a bane weapon against evil outsiders get its increased enhancement bonus against tieflings and deal extra damage against tieflings?

An outsider is "evil" if it has any evil alignment (chaotic evil, neutral evil, or lawful evil). For the purpose of resolving any effect whose results depend on subject's alignment, an outsider also is "evil" if it has the evil subtype, no matter what its alignment actually is (see the evil subtype description in the Glossary of the *Monster Manual*).

Holy water deals damage to undead and to evil outsiders that it strikes. An evil outsider bane weapon is more potent against evil outsiders. Since a tiefling is an outsider with the native subtype, it is susceptible to holy water or to the increased effects from an evil outsider bane weapon only if it has an evil alignment.

Exactly when is a weapon light, one-handed, and two-handed? And when do you take the -2 penalty for using a weapon of the wrong size? How does the system of weapon sizes work with exotic weapons such as the bastard sword and dwarven waraxe, which are one-handed exotic weapons, but two-handed martial weapons? If my dwarf wants to use a dwarven waraxe in one hand, how big a dwarven waraxe can she wield? Suppose my dwarf wants to fight with two weapons and use a dwarven waraxe as a light weapon in her off hand. How big a dwarven waraxe can she use then?

Weapon and Wielder Size

Weapon	Wielder Size								
	Fine	Diminutive	Tiny	Small	Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Colossal
Fine Weapon									
Light	L	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
One-handed	1-H	L (-2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Two-handed	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diminutive Weapon									
Light	1-H (-2)	L	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
One-handed	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Two-handed	—	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)	—	—	—	—	—
Tiny Weapon									
Light	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L	—	—	—	—	—	—
One-handed	—	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)	—	—	—	—	—
Two-handed	—	—	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)	—	—	—	—
Small Weapon									
Light	—	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L	—	—	—	—	—
One-handed	—	—	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)	—	—	—	—
Two-handed	—	—	—	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)	—	—	—
Medium Weapon									
Light	—	—	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L	—	—	—	—
One-handed	—	—	—	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)	—	—	—
Two-handed	—	—	—	—	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)	—	—
Large Weapon									
Light	—	—	—	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L	—	—	—
One-handed	—	—	—	—	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)	—	—
Two-handed	—	—	—	—	—	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)	—
Huge Weapon									
Light	—	—	—	—	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L	—	—
One-handed	—	—	—	—	—	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)	—
Two-handed	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-H	1-H (-2)	L (-4)
Gargantuan Weapon									
Light	—	—	—	—	—	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L	—
One-handed	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-H (-2)	1-H	L (-2)
Two-handed	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-H	1-H (-2)
Colossal Weapon									
Light	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-H (-4)	1-H (-2)	L
One-handed	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-H (-2)	1-H
Two-handed	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2-H

L: The user treats the weapon as a light weapon.

1-H: The user treats the weapon as a one-handed weapon.

2-H: The user treats the weapon as a two-handed weapon.

—: The user is too big or too small to use this weapon.

When you're talking strictly about a weapon's size (as opposed to how one uses the weapon, see the previous question), the designations light, one-handed, and two-handed depend on the kind of weapon and on the size of the wielder for which the weapon was made. According to page 113 in the *Player's Handbook*, a weapon has a size category, such as Small, Medium, or Large, that indicates the intended wielder's size. So, a Medium longsword is a longsword made for a Medium wielder. When a weapon's size category matches the wielder's size, Table 7-5 shows whether it is light, one-handed, or two-handed for that wielder. When the intended wielder and the actual wielder aren't the same size, you have to compare the two creature sizes to determine how the actual user can wield the weapon. If the actual user is much bigger or smaller than the intended user, she can't use the weapon at all. The Weapon and Wielder Size table shows weapon sizes vs. user sizes.

For example, a frost giant (a Huge creature) collects a greataxe, a warhammer, and a light hammer made for a dwarf (a Medium creature). The greataxe is a two-handed weapon for the dwarf, but the giant treats it as a light weapon. The giant

suffers a -4 penalty when using the greataxe. The giant cannot use the warhammer (a one-handed weapon for the dwarf) or the light hammer (a light weapon for the dwarf).

For the example character to wield a dwarven waraxe as a light weapon, the waraxe would have to be made for a Tiny character, and the dwarf would have a -4 attack penalty.

As noted in the previous question, you can decide to wield a one-handed weapon in two hands and get the benefits of a two-handed weapon in combat. To do so, the weapon has to be designated a one-handed weapon for you. The giant in the previous example could not get two-handed weapon damage with the dwarf's greataxe because that weapon is a light weapon for the giant.

The bastard sword, lance, and dwarven waraxe are all two-handed weapons that can be used in one hand under the correct circumstances (the bastard sword and dwarven waraxe are shown on Table 7-5 as one-handed exotic weapons, but they're really two-handed weapons). Treat all three of these weapons as two-handed weapons when determining who can use them and how. For example, a Small character cannot use a lance or bastard sword made for a Medium creature, even when mounted (in the case of a lance) or when the Small character has the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword) feat. (This

reverses the advice the Sage gave about bastard swords and Small characters in earlier FAQs.)

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* says that only a magic weapon with the same or higher enhancement bonus can sunder another magic weapon or a magic shield, but the text for the sunder attack in the *Player's Handbook* doesn't mention this. Also, the *Dungeon Master's Guide* says a magic item gets one extra point of hardness and one extra hit point per +1 of enhancement bonus. The *Player's Handbook*, however, says it gets +2 hardness and +10 hit points per +1 of enhancement bonus. Which is correct? Finally, what happens when a weapon or shield has a special quality that increases the item's price as an additional enhancement bonus? Does the item gain hardness and hit points for that extra enhancement bonus? What about magic items that don't have enhancement bonuses? Do they get any extra hardness or hit points? When a special material gives a nonmagical enhancement bonus, such as adamantine, does the item gain any extra hardness or hit points from that bonus?

You can sunder a magic item with any kind of weapon; you don't need something with an equal or higher enhancement bonus. Text to the contrary (found on page 222 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) is erroneous. A magic item gains +2 hardness and +10 hit points per point of enhancement bonus, as noted in the *Player's Handbook* (see page 165). Both of these corrections are noted in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* errata file.

A magic item gains extra hardness and hit points only for the enhancement bonus that it actually has, not for the effective enhancement bonus used to calculate its price. For example, a +1 flaming burst longsword costs as much as a +3 longsword. A +1 flaming burst longsword has hardness 12 and 15 hit points whereas a +3 longsword has hardness 16 and 35 hit points.

Magic items that have no enhancement bonuses—which is just about everything except weapons, shields, and armor—have no extra hardness or hit points. For example, a paper scroll has a hardness of 0 and 1 hit point, no matter how many spells it contains.

Adamantine itself doesn't provide a nonmagical enhancement bonus; an adamantine item is always a masterwork item, so an adamantine weapon gives you a +1 enhancement bonus on attack rolls. Masterwork items don't have any extra hardness or hit points.

Are weapons made from cold iron resistant to spells that provide an enhancement bonus or a special ability, such as *magic weapon* or *align weapon*?

In a word, no. You have to pay extra to make cold iron magic items, but temporary effects such as the spells you name have their normal effects when used on cold iron items.

The descriptions of ghost touch weapons on pages 224 and 225 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* says that a ghost touch weapon functions as either a corporeal or an incorporeal object, whichever is more beneficial to the wielder at the time. Does that mean that ghost touch weapons also ignore armor and natural armor bonuses to their target's AC in the hands of corporeal creatures?

No, it does not. Ghost touch weapons allow corporeal wielders to strike incorporeal targets (and manifested ghosts) with no miss chance. They also allow manifested ghosts to

make normal attacks (not incorporeal touch attacks) against targets on the Material Plane. An incorporeal creature or manifested ghost can also pick up and move a ghost touch weapon and can carry it along when the creature moves through a solid object. It is the latter property that's being described in the text you're quoting.

Rings

I'm looking at the descriptions for the various command-activated magic rings in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and I can't find any mention of how long these powers actually last once activated. For example, how long do you blink when you activate a *ring of blinking*? How long can you turn spells when you activate a *ring of spell turning*? What happens if I activate a ring twice? Do the durations stack?

In the case of a ring (or any other item) that duplicates a spell effect, one activation functions for the same duration as the duplicated spell cast by a character of the ring's caster level. For example, when you activate a *ring of blinking* you will blink for up to 7 rounds since the ring's caster level is 7th. Since *blink* is a dismissible spell, you can use a standard action to deactivate the effect sooner if you like. In some cases, an item's description specifies a different duration for a spell effect. For example, when you activate a *ring of spell turning*, the ring turns the next nine levels of spell cast on you, no matter how long that takes.

If you activate an item again before a previous activation runs out, the two durations overlap, they do not stack. For example, if you activate a *ring of blinking* and blink for 3 rounds, then activate it again, you wind up blinking for 10 rounds in total. In the case of a *ring of spell turning*, a new activation would mean the ring would turn the next nine levels of spells cast on you after the second activation (any unused turning from the previous activation would be lost).

Scrolls

If you aren't of the right level to read a scroll, you have to make a caster level check to actually use the scroll, right? If this fails, you have to make a DC 5 Wisdom check to avoid a mishap. What happens to the scroll if you fail both checks? Does the failure erase the scroll? What happens if you fail the caster level check, but make the Wisdom check? Is the writing on the scroll still there?

If you do not succeed in activating a scroll spell, the spell is not used up. If you suffer a mishap when you fail to cast the spell, however, you activate the scroll after a fashion and the scroll is wasted. You likewise lose the spell on the scroll if you fail any Concentration check you might have to make while using the scroll. You also lose the spell from the scroll or if you fail any arcane spell failure roll you might have to make when using the scroll.

Can you take 10 or take 20 when attempting to activate a scroll?

No. If you need to make a check to cast a spell from a scroll (see page 238 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), you must make a caster level check to do so. You can never take 10 on a caster level check (see page 65 in the *Player's Handbook*). Since there is a chance for a mishap when you fail to activate a scroll, you can't take 20 on the check (also see page 65 in the *Player's Handbook*).

Staffs

When you use a staff, you use your own relevant ability score and feats to determine the save DCs for the spells cast

from the staff, and you can use your own caster level for those spells too, if it's higher than the staff's caster level. Does this mean you can apply metamagic feats you know to spells you cast from a staff?

You cannot use metamagic feats on spells you cast from a spell trigger item (wand or staff) or spell completion item (scroll). As the introductory text for staves on page 243 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* says, your ability score and relevant feats determine the save DC for any spell you cast from a staff. From the core D&D books, "relevant feats" are Spell Focus and Greater Spell Focus. These feats apply to spells you cast from a staff, provided the staff spell is from the school to which you have applied the feats. Also as noted on page 243, the Spell Penetration and Greater Spell Penetration feats apply to spells you cast from a staff.

When you use a staff, you use your own relevant ability score and feats to determine the save DCs for the spells you cast from the staff, and you can use your own caster level for those spells too, if it's higher than the staff's caster level. So, suppose you're an archmage. Can you use the archmage's high arcana abilities, such as mastery of elements or mastery of shaping with a staff?

The only high arcana ability that works on a spell cast from a staff is spell power, which increases the archmage's caster level.

Wondrous Items

***Boccob's blessed book* allows a wizard to fill its 1,000 pages with spells without paying the 25 gp per page material cost. The *Player's Handbook* (page 179), however, says materials for writing the spell (special quills, inks, and other supplies) cost 100 gp per page. Which number is correct? Does it cost 25 gp or 100 gp per page to write a spell into a spellbook? Does *Boccob's blessed book* merely subtract 25 gp from the 100 gp per page cost? Also, can a wizard write a spell from any source she could otherwise copy? For example, suppose a wizard finds an arcane scroll with a spell that's on the wizard class list. Can the wizard copy that spell into a *Boccob's blessed book*? Could the wizard do the same thing with a wizard spell from another wizard's spellbook? Or is *Boccob's blessed book* only intended as a cheap way to back up spells from one's own spellbook? How long does it take to copy a spell into the book? Do you have to make any skill checks to copy the spell?**

The cost to write a spell into a spellbook is 100 gp per page (for materials) as noted in the *Player's Handbook*. Note that with the arrival of D&D 3.5, this cost is half what it used to be, because spells now require only one page in a spellbook per spell level (minimum one page), rather than two pages per spell level.

You can put any spell into a *Boccob's blessed book* that you normally could put in your regular spellbook. When you do so, you don't have to pay the 100 gp per page for materials. You still have to pay the cost for acquiring the spell (if any). For example you might buy a scroll to copy into the book, or you might borrow a spellbook from another wizard. When you obtain a scroll for the purposes of expanding your own spellbook, you pay the usual market price for the scroll, as noted in Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. If you borrow someone else's book, the usual price for each spell you copy is 50 gp per spell level. Also, you can research a new spell, see Chapter 2 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Writing a spell into a *Boccob's blessed book* takes the same amount of

time as writing it into a regular spellbook (24 hours), and the task requires the same Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level) you need to copy the spell into a regular spellbook (see page 179 in the *Player's Handbook*).

The description for the *glove of storing* in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* ends with two sentences that have given me some trouble. The first says spell durations on items stored in the glove "continue to expire." What does that mean? Suppose I'm a 3rd-level wizard and I cast a *magic weapon* spell on a sword, then store the sword in the glove. Two weeks later, I retrieve the weapon from the glove. Is the weapon still under the effect of the spell, or has the spell long since expired? The final sentence is even more puzzling. It says that when an effect is suppressed or dispelled, the stored item reappears instantly. What does that mean? The stored item reappears when what effect is suppressed or dispelled? What happens if I've got my hands full when the stored item reappears?

Although an item stored in a *glove of storing* is held in stasis, that stasis does not apply to any spells or other magical effects placed on the stored item. The spell or effect's duration continues to run as normal and it expires at the normal time. The 3rd-level wizard in your example casts a *magic weapon* spell that lasts 3 minutes. This duration is not extended if someone puts the weapon that has received the spell into the glove, even though the weapon is otherwise held in stasis. When you pull the weapon out of the glove after two weeks, the *magic weapon* spell effect is long gone.

The final sentence in the item description refers to the glove itself. If the glove's magic is dispelled or suppressed, any item stored in the glove pops out. In your example, if *dispel magic* is used against the glove, the sword stored in the glove pops out if the spell succeeds. Because the glove is a permanent magic item, the dispel effect is only temporary (see the *dispel magic* spell description), and you can place the item back in the glove when it recovers from the effect. The same effect would occur if you take the glove into an *antimagic field*.

Most magic storage items use extradimensional space (such as a *bag of holding*). When the magic on such an item is dispelled or suppressed, access to the item's interior is closed off, and you cannot deposit or retrieve anything in the magic storage item until the suppression ends. A *glove of storing* works differently. When its magic is dispelled or suppressed, an item stored inside pops out into your hand, just as if you recalled the item yourself. If you're already holding an item in that hand, you must either drop the stored item as it reappears or drop the item you're holding so you can hold the stored item. In some cases, your DM may decide you can hold both items at the same time, in which case you don't have to drop anything.

Do ability enhancing items (such as the *headband of intellect*, *cloak of charisma*, and *periapt of wisdom*) grant bonus spells to the appropriate spellcasters? The spells these items are based on would seem to prohibit it, but the only things specifically addressed in the item descriptions are skill points.

Yes, you can get extra bonus spells if you have an item that increases the ability score that governs your spellcasting. To get the extra bonus spells, you must wear the item while resting to regain spells and all through your initial daily preparations for spellcasting. (Even characters who don't prepare spells need to meditate a little while at the beginning of the day; see Daily Readying of spells under the Sorcerers and bards section of

Chapter 10 in the *Player's Handbook*.)

If you lose the item, you immediately lose the bonus spell slots the item gave you, starting with any uncast spells you have of the appropriate levels.

Creating Items

I'm unclear about the exact cost of adding enhancements to a cold iron weapon. Page 284 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* says any magical enhancements to a cold iron item cost an additional 2,000 gp. I am unclear as to whether this is a one-time cost or if it applies to each enhancement. For example, would a +1 cold iron frost longsword cost the same as a +2 cold iron longsword (10,330 gp) since both are "+2" weapons, or would it cost 12,330 gp (2,000 extra for the +1 enhancement, and 2,000 extra for the frost enhancement)? Also, is the extra cost (whatever it might be) added to the magic item's base (so that it takes longer to make a cold iron item), or just to the total price?

You pay +2,000 gp each time you enhance the item, not for each magical property. When you first create the item, you add +2,000 gp on top of the cost of all other enhancements you add to the weapon, and that 2,000 gp increases only the item's market price. So your example +1 cold iron frost longsword would have a market price of 10,330 gp (30+300+8,000+2,000). The cost to create the sword would be 6,330 gp (30+300+4,000+2,000) and 320 XP (1/25th of the 8,000 gp cost for the enhancements). The sword would take 8 days to make (the 8,000 gp divided by 1,000).

If you later went back and added another +1 enhancement, you'd have to pay the extra 2,000 gp again.

Combat

Exactly when can a character make a Reflex saving throw? The saving throw section on the *Player's Handbook* says Reflex saves depend on a character's ability to dodge out of the way. Does that mean you can't make Reflex saves if you can't move?

A character can attempt a Reflex save anytime she is subjected to an effect that allows a Reflex save. A Reflex save usually involves some dodging, but a Reflex save is not completely dependent on a character's ability to move around. It also can depend on luck, variations in the effect that makes the save necessary in the first place, and a host of other miraculous factors that keep heroic characters in the D&D game from meeting an untimely fate.

In most cases, you make Reflex saves normally, no matter how bad your circumstances are, but there are a few conditions that interfere with Reflex saves:

- If you've suffered Dexterity damage or Dexterity drain, you must use your current, lower Dexterity modifier for your Reflex saves.
- If you're cowering, you lose your Dexterity bonus (if any). The maximum Dexterity bonus you can have while cowering is +0, and that affects your Reflex saves accordingly.
- If you're dead, you become an object. Unattended objects can't make saving throws.
- If you're entangled, your effective Dexterity score drops by -4, and you must use your lower Dexterity modifier for Reflex saves.
- If you're exhausted, your effective Strength and Dexterity scores drop by -6, and you must use your lower Dexterity modifier for Reflex saves.
- If you're fatigued, your effective Strength and Dexterity scores drop by -2, and you must use your lower Dexterity modifier for Reflex saves.
- If you're frightened or panicked, you have a -2 penalty on all saving throws, including Reflex saving throws.
- If you're helpless, your Dexterity score is effectively 0. You still can make Reflex saves, but your Dexterity modifier is -5. You're helpless whenever you are paralyzed, unconscious, or asleep.

Just when do so-called full-round actions take place?

Does a sorcerer's heightened spell (or any other spell with a metamagic feat applied) go off on the sorcerer's turn, or not until just before the sorcerer's action on the following turn? What about other full-round actions? The coup de grace has generated a lot of problems in our campaign. When is this action finished? If it's not over until just before the attacker's next action, can the target's friends save her, perhaps by getting in the way or dragging her out of reach?

Any full-round action takes place entirely during the acting character's turn. That is, the action begins and ends during the acting character's turn in the initiative order. Though taking a full-round action leaves you no time to move (except, possibly, a 5-foot step) it does not continue into the next round in the same way a spell with a casting time of 1 round does. A full-round action is quicker than a 1-round casting time.

Delivering a coup de grace requires a full-round action, not 1 round. The coup de grace is delivered during the attacker's turn, and the target's allies can do little about it except to drag

the target out of reach before the attacker can act (this requires the allies to act before the attacker does during the current round), or fell the attacker with the attacks of opportunity the attacker triggers when delivering the coup de grace (this requires the allies to be in position to threaten the attacker). Since attacks of opportunity are resolved before the action that triggers them, they can prevent a coup de grace if they drop the attacker. Also, a helpless character's allies could ready an action to attack anyone that tries to hurt the helpless ally, but since doing so requires the ready action, they're usually better off dragging their helpless ally to a place of safety.

If you have more than one attack, can you attack one foe, take a 5-foot step, and make another attack against a different foe (assuming of course, that you didn't otherwise move during your turn)?

Yes, you can take a 5-foot step before, after, or during your full attack action (provided that you don't take any other movement during the round).

My DM thinks that if you have four attacks in a round, and you're using the full attack action, you have to designate all your targets at the beginning of the round, and that you can't switch your targets once you start rolling your attacks. I think you choose the target for any attack after you have seen the effect of your last attack. Please help us.

Well, your DM is always right, but the rules are on your side. You pick a target for each of your attacks as you make the attacks, not at the beginning of your turn; see the description of the full attack action in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Total cover prevents any attack against you. You can use a tower shield to get total cover if you give up all your attacks. What does "give up all your attacks" mean? Can you move while getting total cover from the shield? Can you cast a spell? Also, do you get total cover from all directions or from just one side of your square? Will the total cover from a tower shield negate spell effects? Will it negate attacks of opportunity from movement or from other actions such as spellcasting? Will it prevent charge attacks against you? What about bull rush attacks? Can it prevent grapple attacks or snatch attacks? Will it stop fear effects, gaze attacks, or clouds of poison gas? Will it defeat traps?

To claim total cover from a tower shield, you must use a standard action. The tower shield rules don't say that, but that's what they mean. Since you can only take one standard action each round, you cannot also attack, cast a spell, activate a magic item (except for some use-activated items), use a special ability, use total defense, or start or complete a full-round action during the same round you claim total cover from the shield. You can, however, take a move action before or after you claim cover from the shield.

Like other kinds of cover, the shield has to have a location relative to you on the battlefield. When you use the shield for cover, choose one edge of your space (not a corner). You have total cover against any attack's line of effect that passes through that side of your space. If an attack's line of effect goes through the corner of the side of your space that the shield blocks, you get cover from the shield (+4 AC, +2 on Reflex

saves) instead of total cover. If an attack's line of effect passes through a side of your space that the shield does not block, you get no cover from the shield at all. To determine where the line of effect enters your space, draw a line from the attacker's center to your center. Or, in the case of a magical effect, from the effect's point of origin and your center.

Once you claim cover from the shield, the shield keeps blocking the side of your space that you chose until the beginning of your next turn, when you can again decide whether you'll use the shield for cover. Once you choose the side of your space that the shield blocks, you cannot change it until your next turn.

You continue to threaten the area around you while you use the shield for cover; however, it provides your opponents with the same benefits you get. You cannot make attacks through the side of your space that the shield blocks, and should you attack through the corners of that space, your foe gets cover against your attack. Since cover of any kind prevents attacks of opportunity (see page 151 in the *Player's Handbook*), the shield keeps you from making attacks of opportunity in a pretty wide swath.

Total cover or cover from a tower shield has the following effects in different situations:

- **Magical Attacks:** A tower shield's effects on magical attacks depend on the kind of magical attack. Any attack aimed at your equipment is aimed at you. If a magical attack has you as a specific target (that is it does not merely affect the area that contains you but is aimed right at you), the shield has no effect. All rays fall into this category, as does any spell that has a Target entry in its header and any spell that has an Effect entry and affects creatures (provided, of course, that the attacker can and does choose the shield user as a target). Magical attacks that fill areas (bursts, cones, cylinders, lines, emanations, and spreads) are subject to all the rules for cover on page 151 of the *Player's Handbook*. Such attacks are completely blocked if line of effect between you and the attack's point of origin passes through the side of your space the shield blocks. You get cover (+4 AC, +2 on Reflex saves) if the magical attack's line of effect passes through the corner of the blocked side. Spread effects reach around the shield if they normally would extend into your space, but you still get a Reflex save bonus for cover when they do. A gaze attack is blocked if the shield would give you total cover against attacks from the creature with the gaze attack. If the shield gives you cover only, you're still subject to the gaze attack (although you could avert or close your eyes to avoid the attack).
- **Attacks of Opportunity:** As noted earlier, cover or total cover prevents attacks of opportunity. So you could, for example, hunker down behind a tower shield and pick up a weapon or rummage around in a backpack and avoid attacks of opportunity against you. If you're moving while using the shield for cover, things get a little more complicated. You must determine whether the shield gives you cover (or total cover) at the point during your movement when you'd normally provoke an attack of opportunity. Remember that attacks of opportunity are usually resolved before the actions that provoke them. In many cases, the shield won't be positioned correctly

to protect you during your whole move.

- **Charging and Bull Rushing:** Opponents can charge you while you claim cover from the shield. An opponent moves as normal when charging you, moving to the closest square from which a melee attack normally would be possible. If the shield gives you total cover from the attack, the attack automatically fails. Foes can bull rush you normally, moving right into your space in spite of the shield. You normally get an attack of opportunity against someone entering your space, but not if the shield gives your foe cover or total cover.
- **Grapple and Snatch Attacks:** Total cover from a tower shield blocks such attacks (the foe just can't get hold of you). The foe could, however grab the shield. Conduct such attacks just like any other grapple or snatch attack. Your foe can't damage you unless he pins you first. You can escape the foe's hold simply by dropping the shield (a standard action since its strapped to your arm), so long as the foe has not pinned you.
- **Traps:** Cover or total cover from a tower shield is just as effective against a trap as it is against any other attack.

What happens if you attempt a coup de grace with a weapon that deals nonlethal damage, such as a sap or a weapon with the merciful property? Is the coup de grace still automatically a critical hit? Is the target required to make a Fortitude save? If so, what's the DC, and what happens if the target fails? What happens if you use a normally lethal weapon to deal nonlethal damage as a coup de grace?

This question takes us beyond the rules. You could rule that you cannot deliver a coup de grace with nonlethal damage, but if you want rules for using nonlethal damage in such an attack, try these:

When you attempt a coup de grace with a weapon that deals nonlethal damage, you automatically hit and inflict a critical hit. Note that you cannot deliver a coup de grace to a creature that is immune to critical hits. Calculate the nonlethal damage from the resulting critical hit just as you would normally. If the nonlethal damage isn't sufficient to render the subject unconscious (see page 153 in the *Player's Handbook*), the subject should make a Fortitude save (DC of 10 + the nonlethal damage dealt). If the save fails, the subject is rendered unconscious. The subject immediately suffers enough nonlethal damage to make his current nonlethal damage total equal to his current hit points +10. For example, you perform a nonlethal coup de grace on a helpless gnomish that currently has 12 hit points. You hit the gnomish and deal 10 points of nonlethal damage, not enough to knock out the gnomish. The gnomish, however, must make a DC 20 Fortitude save. If the gnomish fails the save, its nonlethal damage total immediately rises to 22 (current hit points +10), and it falls unconscious. This is roughly the equivalent of being killed when you fail your saving throw against a lethal coup de grace, since death occurs at -10 hit points.

If a creature has 0 reach, it must enter an enemy's square to attack that enemy, correct? If the creature enters the enemy's square, does it now threaten the enemy? Is it possible for the creature to flank the enemy? If so, where

would an ally need to be positioned in order to flank the enemy?

If you're armed and you're in a position to make a melee attack against a foe, you threaten that foe (see Threatened Squares under the Attacks of Opportunity section in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*). To be armed you must wield a weapon or have natural weaponry. If your reach is 0, you can threaten foes in the same square with you only.

A creature with a reach of 0 cannot flank an opponent (see Flanking in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*). Such a creature can neither gain a flanking bonus from an ally nor grant a flanking bonus to an ally, not even when two or more of them enter the same foe's square and attack.

When grappling, the order of events is as follows: starting the grapple (the "grab"), then grappling, then pinning, right? How many of these can you do in a round? Can you, in one attack, go all the way to pinned or is it based on the number of attacks you have?

It's the latter. You can grab someone and establish a hold with one attack, but pinning an opponent is an option only when you can make an attack and you already have a foe in your grasp (see If You're Grappling in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*). To grab and pin someone in one turn, you have to have at least two attacks available that turn.

Can you always use Escape Artist instead of a Strength check when you're grappling, or is this only for escaping a grapple?

You don't make a Strength check when grappling; you make a grapple check, which is like a melee attack roll. (See Grapple Checks in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*).

If a foe has grappled or pinned you, you can make an Escape Artist check to escape the grapple or break the pin. You cannot use an Escape Artist check for anything other than escape. That is, you can't use an Escape Artist check to establish a hold, damage your opponent, draw a light weapon, move, establish a pin, use the opponent's weapon, or even to oppose your foe's grapple check when the foe is trying to do any of those things to you.

If a creature with reach, such as an assassin vine, grapples you, it then pulls you into its space. Does this move happen all at once or is there a limit to how far you are pulled in a round?

When an attacker grapples, it is the attacker who must move into the defender's space, not the other way around. If you can reach a foe and you establish a hold, you move into the foe's space as part of the grapple attack; this movement is free and doesn't count against your movement for the turn (see Starting a Grapple in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*).

A monster with the Improved Grab special attack, such as an assassin vine, pulls the foe into its own space rather than moving into the foe's space (see the Improved Grab entry in the *Monster Manual* glossary). This is also part of the attack and does not count as part of the attacker's or defender's movement.

Is sunder a special standard action or is it a melee attack variant? It has its own entry on the actions table, but the text describing it refers to it as a melee attack. Is sunder a melee attack only in the sense of hitting something with a melee weapon, or is sunder a true melee attack?

Sunder is a special kind of melee attack. If it were a special

standard action, its description would say so (as the descriptive text for the Manyshot feat says).

If you make a full attack, and you have multiple attacks from a high base attack bonus, you can sunder more than once, or attack and sunder, or some other combination of attacking and sundering.

Sunder does indeed get its own entry in Table 8-2: Actions in Combat in the *Player's Handbook*. It needs one because unlike a regular melee attack, sunder provokes an attack of opportunity (although not if you have the Improved Sunder feat).

You can also disarm, grapple, or trip as a melee attack (or attack of opportunity).

In a combat, Bob the fighter is unconscious from wounds, and Grog the orc moves into Bob's square. A friendly cleric heals Bob so that Bob regains consciousness. So the orc and prone Bob are now occupying the same square. Now what happens? The rules say that Bob and Grog can't be in the same square, right? So, what happens? Is Grog somehow prevented from entering Bob's square? Does Grog have to leave when Bob wakes up?

You can enter another creature's square and even stop there if the creature is helpless, or if that creature is much bigger or smaller than you are (see Moving Through a Square in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*).

It's best to assume that Bob is prone (there's no rule that says you're prone when you lose consciousness, but common sense demands that it be so), and that he can remain in Grog's square so long as he remains prone. If he gets up, he must leave Grog's square first, which provokes an attack of opportunity from Grog.

Earlier, you talked about Bob the fighter, who was unconscious and later woke up, prone, to find Grog the orc standing in his space. You said Bob has to stay prone so long as he remained in Grog's space, and that Bob would provoke an attack of opportunity upon leaving that space. Suppose Bob made a grapple attack on Grog? He can grapple Grog, can't he? Bob would be at a negative for being prone but would not provoke an attack of opportunity, would he? Assuming Bob establishes a hold on Grog, how long does the prone penalty last?

Sure, Bob can grapple Grog. Bob's initial grab attack provokes an attack of opportunity from Grog unless Bob has the Improved Grapple feat or some other circumstance prevents Grog from threatening Bob. (For example, Grog would not threaten Bob if Grog were wielding a reach weapon.) If Grog deals damage to Bob with an attack of opportunity, Bob's grapple attempt is over.

If Grog doesn't damage Bob, Bob's initial touch attack would suffer a -4 penalty for being prone. If the grab succeeds, Bob is still prone and still suffers the -4 penalty for being prone for the ensuing opposed grapple check. (Some DMs I know would give Bob an offsetting bonus for being able to wrap himself around Grog's ankles, but I don't recommend doing so; it's pretty easy to kick loose from somebody lying on the ground when you're standing up).

If Bob gets a hold on Grog, he normally would have to move into Grog's space to maintain the hold. This movement would provoke attacks of opportunity from foes that threaten Bob. However, Bob is in Grog's space already, so he doesn't have to move to maintain the hold, and he is spared attacks of opportunity from Grog's allies.

You can move when grappling (see page 156 in the *Player's Handbook*). Normally you drag foes along with you when you move during grappling, but there's no reason why Bob can't just use a move action to stand up in Grog's space once he has hold of Grog. Bob has to win an opposed grapple check against Grog (still at -4 for being prone) to stand up. This doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity from Grog (who doesn't threaten Bob or anyone else while grappling), but it does from Grog's allies if they threaten Bob (see page 143 in the *Player's Handbook*). Once on his feet, Bob can keep grappling without the prone penalty, or just let Grog go. If Bob lets go, he can leave Grog's space with a 5-foot step and not provoke any attacks of opportunity. (Getting up is a move action, but its not "movement" for purposes of taking a 5-foot step because Bob isn't actually moving any distance, see page 144 in the *Player's Handbook*).

Suppose a fighter and an archer go at the same initiative. The archer is not in an adjacent square but only one square over. The fighter is not using a reach weapon. Assuming the archer plans to use a full attack action (and doesn't use a 5-foot step), and since they have the same initiative, could the fighter move his 5-foot step (toward the archer) as the archer is firing and get an attack of opportunity?

The question is moot, because two characters never have the same initiative. If two characters tie with their initiative rolls, you must break the tie before starting the combat (see Initiative in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*).

The fighter could use the ready or delay special initiative actions to act at about the same time as the archer. In the case of the ready action, the fighter could ready an attack against the archer when the archer shoots. When the archer shoots, the readied action is triggered. The fighter acts before the archer shoots (readied actions are resolved prior to the actions that trigger them, see the ready description in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*). Assuming that the fighter has not previously moved this round, he could make a 5-foot step and then attack the archer. Since the fighter now threatens the archer, the fighter can make an attack of opportunity against the archer when the archer fires, provided the archer does not use a 5-foot step to get out of reach first.

If the fighter was delaying, the action would be resolved in the same way, provided the fighter chose to act before the archer. If the delaying fighter acts after the archer, the fighter won't get any attack of opportunity against the archer (this turn, at least).

Spells

Within the spell section, you can find general spell questions as well as questions alphabetized by a specific spell highlighted by the question and answer.

General Spell Questions

For a good cleric, what kind of action is it to spontaneously convert a prepared spell into a cure spell?

It's not an action at all. It's part of casting the spell (and thus part of the action you use to cast the spell). Evil clerics spontaneously casting *inflict* spells use the same rule.

You can apply a metamagic feat to a spontaneous spell, but when you do so, the spell takes at least a full-round action to cast (or an extra full-round action of the spell normally has a casting time); see Spontaneous Casting and Metamagic Feats in Chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*.

How many times in a day can a priest have his or her spells replenished? I have a player who cites the *Player's Handbook* as saying that the priest need meditate for only 1 hour to regain his spells. Please shed some light on this if you can.

A cleric (or other divine spellcaster) regains spells once a day. This requires 1 hour of meditation at the correct time of day (which can vary depending of the character and his deity). See Preparing Divine Spells in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Many animated objects have hardness scores. What affect, if any, will an animated object's hardness have on spells used against the animated object? For example, an animated wooden table would have hardness 5, right? How would that hardness affect spells such as *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *ray of frost*, and *magic missile*?

The spell in question has an energy descriptor, hardness affects the attack as noted in the rules for damaging inanimate objects (see page 165 in the *Player's Handbook*); here's a summary:

- Acid and sonic attacks ignore hardness. *Melf's acid arrow* has the acid descriptor and would ignore an animated object's hardness.
- Hardness applies to electricity and fire attacks. These attacks deal half damage to inanimate objects, but animated objects are creatures and they take full damage (less the effect of the hardness). You would subtract 5 points for hardness from whatever damage a *fireball* or *lightning bolt* spell deals to the animated table in your example. Reduce the damage for a successful saving throw before you apply hardness.
- Hardness also applies to cold damage. Cold attacks deal one-quarter damage to inanimate objects, but again, an animated object takes full damage less the effect of the hardness. You would subtract 5 points of damage for hardness from whatever damage a *ray of frost* spell deals to the animated table in your example. Since *ray of frost* deals only 1d3 points of damage, it will prove ineffective against the animated table unless you somehow increase the damage the spell deals.
- Force effects ignore hardness. A *magic missile* spell is a force effect that normally cannot be aimed at an object. Because an animate object is a creature, however, it can affect the animated table in the example.

Several spells, such as *scorching ray* and *meteor swarm*, require the user to make multiple ranged touch attacks.

Does the caster have to use the full attack action to use all the ranged touch attacks these spells allow? If so, how does this work? Does the caster have to hold the charge (like a touch spell) and then use the full attack action later? Also what attack bonus does the caster use? Can the caster use his full attack bonus for each ranged touch attack, or does the caster's attack bonus decrease by 5 for each attack? What happens if the caster uses the Quicken Spell feat and casts the spell as a free action? What attack bonus does he use then? How many ranged touch attacks can he make? Do the caster's other actions during the rest of the round affect his attack bonus when using the spell?

Both of the example spells have a casting time of 1 standard action and an instantaneous duration. The caster uses the cast a spell action (a standard action), and makes all the ranged touch attacks the spell allows as part of that standard action (not as part of the attack or full attack action); making these attacks is not an action at all.

The caster uses his full attack bonus for all the ranged touch attacks from either example spell. Any other spells that allow multiple ranged touch attacks work the same way unless their descriptions specifically say otherwise.

Casting a quickened version of either example spell works exactly the same way (although you'd have to be an epic-level character to cast a quickened *meteor swarm*); the caster makes all the ranged touch attacks the spell allows as part of the free action he used to cast the spell. The caster generally uses his full attack bonus for each ranged touch attack. Any other attacks the caster might make during the same round as the quickened spell have no effect on the caster's attack bonus for the ranged touch attacks; however, if the caster does something that gives him an attack penalty on all his attack rolls until his next turn, such as fighting defensively, that attack penalty also applies to his ranged touch attacks from the quickened spell.

Specific Spells

In a recent game we began wondering if the *arcane sight* spell lets you see illusions, *glyphs of warding*, and other kinds of magical traps. We agreed that the spell would reveal the auras from glyphs, symbols, and most other magical traps, but not see an aura around the illusion of a door, floor, or creature.

It's correct that the *arcane sight* spell won't automatically allow you to look right through an otherwise opaque figment, such as an illusory door, floor, or wall. Any active illusion, however, has a magical aura that divination spells such as *detect magic* or *arcane sight* can reveal. In the case of *arcane sight*, you know immediately if anything you can see has a magical aura, and you know what that aura's power is (as explained in the *detect magic* spell description). You also immediately know the aura's location. If what you're looking at happens to be a figment, you do not know it's a figment. You can, however, make a Spellcraft check (making the check doesn't require an action from you) to determine the aura's school. If the check succeeds, you know that the aura is from the illusion school, but you cannot tell its subschool (it could be a figment, glamor, pattern, phantasm, or shadow).

Looking at an illusion with *arcane sight* counts as interacting with it, however, and if the illusion in question allows a saving throw to disbelieve, you can immediately make a saving throw. If you have identified the aura's school as an

illusion, you have grounds to find the illusion's reality suspicious, and you get a +4 bonus on the saving throw (since you know it's some kind of illusion). If you make a successful saving throw to disbelieve a figment or phantasm, then you can see through it, although the figment or phantasm remains visible as a faint outline (see the discussion of the illusion school in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*).

When do you make your save against a *blade barrier* spell? Suppose you have already moved in the round and someone casts a *blade barrier* spell on you. You are supposed to move out of the area in the most direct path to avoid damage from the spell. Since you've already moved, do you even get a save against the spell? If you make your save and cannot move yet, do you take damage from the spell anyway? Or do you get to move again? Or do you wait until it's your turn and then make the save?

You make the save when the spell hits you. If you succeed, you take no damage from the spell, and you wind up on one side of the barrier or the other (under the current rules, the barrier must be vertical). Upon making a successful save, you choose which side of the barrier you'll be on. If movement is necessary to place you on that side, you immediately move to that side along the shortest possible path, even if you've already moved that round. For Medium creatures, such movement will be fairly minor (usually 5 feet). In the case of very big creatures, the DM might want to limit the creature to the side that requires the least movement. If it's not possible for you to move, or not possible to move to a safe side, you're stuck in the barrier and you take damage.

Exactly how many bolts of lightning can you call with a *call lightning* spell? Can you save up the bolts you're entitled to call every minute, or do you lose them if you don't call them when they're due? Or does the spell last until you've called all the bolts the spell can produce?

Once you cast the spell, you can call a bolt of lightning every round, not every minute. During the round when you cast the spell, you can call a bolt as part of the spellcasting action. During later rounds, it takes a standard action to call a bolt.

The spell's duration starts running the moment you finish the spell. You can call a maximum of one bolt each round while the spell lasts. If you let a round go by without calling a bolt, you can't save that bolt for later, but you can keep calling bolts during later rounds until the spell's duration runs out.

If a spellcaster is subjected to the *enervation* spell and gets two negative levels, does the character also lose the ability to cast his highest level of spells? The descriptive text for negative levels says that a spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot (the highest) for each negative level. This would imply that the spellcaster could still be capable of casting his highest level spells so long as he hasn't been enervated for more negative levels than he has spells of his highest level.

You are correct. A spellcaster with a negative level loses one spell of the highest level he currently has available to cast. He does not necessarily lose his whole highest level of spells (although that's a real possibility when a spellcaster picks up several negative levels).

Will a *dispel magic* spell dispel an *Evard's black tentacles* spell? The spell description says the tentacles are immune to all types of damage, but is a *dispel magic* spell

“damage?” If *dispel magic* works against the tentacles, does it dispel just one tentacle or all of them? Will a *disintegrate* spell destroy a tentacle the way it can destroy the various Bigby's hand spells?

You can't damage the field of tentacles from an *Evard's black tentacles* spell, not even with a *disintegrate* spell. You can dispel the field, however, in exactly the same way you can dispel other spells that fill an area. If the *dispel magic* is successful, all of the tentacles go away.

Exactly how do the tentacles from an *Evard's black tentacles* spell attack creatures? For example, does a tentacle have a miss chance when attacking an invisible opponent? Also, how do you figure out where the individual tentacles appear? Can more than one tentacle appear in the same 5-foot square?

The *Evard's black tentacles* spell creates a field of numerous tentacles in a 20-foot radius spread. Tentacles sprout from all the surfaces within the spread. The spell actually works something like an *entangle* spell that's capable of dealing bludgeoning damage. The spell uses an opposed grapple check instead of a saving throw to determine if creatures within its spread are affected. Any creature inside the spread might become grappled, as noted in the spell description. The spell does not make an initial touch attack as with normal grappling attempts, so it cannot miss, even if a creature is invisible or otherwise concealed. The spell cannot grapple incorporeal creatures, and a creature using a *blink* spell has a 50% chance to avoid being grappled.

As noted earlier, the spell creates a field of numerous tentacles. These tentacles fill up the spread, and it's not necessary to determine where any particular tentacle is.

Does the *feblemind* spell affect only a character's base Intelligence score, or does the spell make the subject's Intelligence score 1 regardless of magical bonuses? If the spell affects only base Intelligence, will any magic that boosts Intelligence (such as a *potion of fox's cunning*) break the spell? Do you have to get your Intelligence to 3 or higher to break the spell?

A *feblemind* spell reduces the subject's Intelligence and Charisma scores to 1 (not just Intelligence). Of course, if the subject already has a score of 0, *feblemind* doesn't increase the score. The subject's Intelligence and Charisma become 1 (or stay at 0) regardless of any enhancements or other increases to those scores.

A *feblemind* effect remains until the subject receives a *heal*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* spell. The subject cannot benefit from any effect that increases Intelligence or Charisma until the *feblemind* effect is removed.

The *feblemind* spell keeps you from casting spells, presumably because it makes your Intelligence and Charisma scores 1. What if it is your Wisdom score that governs your spells? Can you still cast spells then? Can you use spell-like abilities? Supernatural abilities? Extraordinary abilities?

You can't cast any spells when you're feble-minded, no matter what ability governs your spells. The spell scrambles the higher functions of your brain, rendering you unable to use spells and suppressing your Intelligence and Charisma scores.

Feblemind prevents the use of spell-like abilities, but not supernatural or extraordinary abilities. Also, as noted in the spell description, you cannot use any Intelligence- or Charisma-

based skills while feebleminded.

The *harm* spell deals 10 points of damage per caster level (to a maximum of 150 points at 15th level) and cannot take a target's hit points to less than 1. If the target creature makes a successful saving throw, the damage is reduced by half, but the spell still cannot reduce the target's hit points to less than 1. What happens when the spell deals 50 points of damage or more to the target (as it might to any creature that has 51 hit points or more)? Does the death from massive damage rule apply? What if I have 110 hit points and an 11th-level caster casts *harm* on me? I'll take 109 points of damage from the spell if I fail my save, or 55 points if I make my save, right? In either case, I'll have to make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid death from massive damage, right? If my hired lackey, who has 49 hit points, receives the same spell, he'll take either 48 points of damage or 24 points. In either case, he's not subject to death from massive damage. Is this correct?

Technically, that's right. If you take 50 points of damage (or more) all at once, you're subject to the death from massive damage rule (see page 145 in the *Player's Handbook*). It makes no difference what the source of that damage is.

In the case of the *harm* spell, the death from massive damage rule creates a situation that's arguably absurd, because once you have 51 hit points or more, you suddenly become susceptible to instant death from the spell when lesser beings (with fewer hit points) do not. If the situation really bothers you, you might try one of the following house rules:

No Instant Death from Harm Spells: The death from massive damage rule doesn't apply to damage inflicted from a *harm* spell.

Expended Instant Death from Harm Spells: Whenever you fail your save against a *harm* spell, you must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or die, no matter how much damage the spell actually deals to you. If your save against a *harm* spell succeeds, you still have to make a DC 15 Fortitude save or die if the spell deals at least 50 points of damage to you.

The first unofficial rule should prove easier to remember and use, and it matches the intent behind the *harm* spell better than the second rule. The second rule, however, provides a better fit with the death from massive damage rule.

Let's say you've been fighting a giant created by the *major image* spell for a couple of rounds, and it has gotten a few good hits on you. Finally, you make your Will save and you find out that the giant you were battling was an illusion. Do you regain your hit points once you find out it was an illusion or do you still have the damage you took?

Major image is a figment, so it can't damage you at all, even if you don't detect the illusion (see the discussion of the Illusion school in Chapter 10 of the *Player's Handbook*). If the giant was created with a shadow effect (such as the *greater shadow* conjuration spell), it can damage you. If you take damage from the illusory (shadow) giant and later realize the giant was an illusion, you don't regain any hit points for doing so.

Are the multiple figments from a *mirror image* spell legal targets for cleaving? That is, if you have the Cleave feat and you hit an image and destroy it, can you then attack another target within reach (such as another figment from the spell or perhaps the spell user)? What about

Whirlwind Attack? Can you use this feat to attack all the images around the spell user? What about spells that allow multiple targets, such as *magic missile*? Can you aim *magic missiles* at different images?

For all intents and purposes, the figments from a foe's *mirror image* spell are your foes. You aim your spells and your attacks at the figments just as though they were real creatures. Any spell you can aim at a creature you can aim at an image. When you use a spell that allows you to select multiple creatures as targets, such as *magic missile*, you can choose multiple images as targets.

If you have the Cleave or Great Cleave feat, destroying an image with a melee attack triggers the feat (and your cleaving attack might well strike the spell user instead of another image). Likewise, you can use Whirlwind Attack to strike at any image you can reach. A Whirlwind Attack almost certainly will allow you to strike once at the spell user.

Is there a way to decide which squares the figments from a *mirror image* spell occupy? Or do the images distribute themselves randomly? If it's the latter, how does the DM decide where they go?

Although the spell description says the images from a *mirror image* spell always stay within 5 feet of either the user or another image, it's easiest to assume that all the images occupy the same space the spell user occupies. Any attack that can reach the user's space can affect an image.

The *mirror image* spell description says the images have an Armor Class of 10 + size modifier + Dexterity modifier. Is it possible to improve this with spells the spellcaster casts on herself, such as *shield* or *mage armor*? If so, why doesn't the spell description say the images have the caster's Armor Class? What happens if the caster has cover from her surroundings? Will cover improve the images' ACs? What about concealment? Will fog or foliage produce a miss chance for a foe that aims an attack at an image? What about magical concealment, such as a *blur* or *displacement* spell?

The images from a *mirror image* spell don't use the caster's Armor Class. Use the formula in the spell description to calculate each image's Armor Class (10 + caster's size modifier + caster's Dexterity modifier). Use the caster's current Dexterity modifier for each image's Armor Class, no matter how the caster happened to get that modifier. Any Armor Class improvements the caster might have from equipment she carries or wears, or from magic operating on her person, don't apply to the images. For example, a Medium user with a Dexterity score of 16, a *shield* spell, and a suit of +2 *leather armor* has an Armor Class of 21 (10 +4 shield, +4 armor, and +3 Dexterity), but her images have an Armor Class of 13 (10 +3 Dexterity).

It's easiest to assume the images share the user's location on the battlefield, and gain any cover bonuses that might apply to the spell user in that location. If the character in the previous example were behind cover, she would have an Armor Class of 25 and her images would have an Armor Class of 17.

If the user has concealment from her surroundings, the images have the same concealment. The images also look just like the caster, and they share purely visual effects such as the *blur* or *displacement* spell. If the *mirror image* user is also using either of these effects, an attack aimed at an image has the same miss chance an attack aimed at the caster has.

What happens if a *mirror image* user is incorporeal? Are the user's images also incorporeal? Do attacks aimed at the images have the incorporeal miss chance? If the incorporeal user moves through a wall, can the images move through the wall, too? What happens if the user goes to another plane? Do the images go along? What if the *mirror image* user employs a *blink* spell?

Incorporeal spell casters create corporeal effects. So the figments from an incorporeal user's *mirror image* spell are themselves corporeal. Attacks aimed at the images have no incorporeal miss chance.

The images, however, appear like the caster and move as the caster moves. If an incorporeal user moves through a wall, its mirror images also appear to move through the wall.

If a *mirror image* user moves to another plane, the images go along. If the user also employs a *blink* spell, the images blink right along with the user, and any attack aimed at an image has the same miss chance (50%) it has if aimed at the caster.

What happens when an attacker accidentally uses a touch spell against a figment from a *mirror image* spell? You can hold the charge with a touch spell, right? So if you touch an image (which really isn't there), is the touch spell discharged? Does the touch spell user get a chance to disbelieve the image and avoid discharging the spell?

As noted in an earlier question, the figments from a *mirror image* spell function just like creatures for the purpose of aiming spells. If a foe using a touch spell touches an image, the spell is harmlessly discharged (though the image is destroyed). There is no chance to disbelieve a *mirror image* spell—if there was, the spell would have a saving throw entry and the entry would read “Will disbelief.”

Am I right in assuming that when the *mislead* spell description refers to *improved invisibility* it really means *greater invisibility*?

Yes, you are.

Is it possible to cast the *permanency* spell from a scroll? If so, who pays the XP cost for the spell effect made permanent: the scroll creator or the individual who casts the spell from the scroll? Who must meet the minimum level requirement for making a particular spell permanent? For example, see *invisibility* has a minimum level of 10th. Does the scroll creator or the individual who casts the spell from the scroll have to meet this minimum? Does the minimum level refer to arcane spellcaster's caster level or character level?

In general, when you create a scroll with a spell that has an XP cost, you have to pay the XP cost for casting the spell along with the costs for creating the scroll (see Creating Scrolls in Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Since the scroll creator has paid all the costs, the scroll user doesn't have to pay them.

In the case of the *permanency* spell, however, it's best to make the scroll user pay the cost of actually making a particular spell's effect permanent. The scroll creator still pays the XP cost to make the scroll.

You must use the spell's caster level to determine if the spell meets the minimum level to make a spell permanent. In the case of a character casting a spell herself, the spell's caster level is the caster's class level in the class that made the spell available in the first place. For example, when a 12th-level

wizard/3rd level fighter casts any wizard spell, the spell's caster level is 12th.

In the case of a spell cast from a scroll, the spell's caster level is the scroll's caster level. The scroll's creator sets the caster level for the scroll when making the scroll, as noted in the Magic Item Descriptions section of Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

How does *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* work with preparing extra spells? Can I cast *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* in the middle of the day, and then prepare three levels of new spells with 15 minutes of preparation? Or do I have to cast the enhancer in the morning to get the new spells? The spell description says you prepare and cast the extra spells normally, so I assume that you have to take the 15 minutes to prepare the new spells in the middle of the day. Is this correct?

Perhaps a general overview of the *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* spell is in order here: You can use the spell one of two ways, either to prepare up to three levels of extra spells or to retain a single spell of up to 3rd level that you have already cast.

When you use the enhancer to retain a spell, you simply cast the enhancer within 1 round of casting the spell you want to retain. The spell you choose to retain reappears in your mind, ready to cast, without any further effort on your part.

When using the spell to prepare extra spells, you follow all the rules for preparing spells. You could indeed cast *Rary's mnemonic enhancer* in the middle of the day and then spend 15 minutes preparing up to three levels of additional spells. Or you could cast the spell at the beginning of the day and prepare all your spells, your normal allotment and the extras, as part of your usual preparation time (usually 1 hour; see page 178 in the *Player's Handbook*).

I know the spell description for *scrying* says the spell creates a magical sensor located near the subject. I'm wondering if the spell can scry on locations or items as well as creatures? If it cannot scry on a location or item, can it at least look around the creature's location and see what the location looks like? I mean, to me, it sounds like you cast the spell and all you see is the creature. That's not terribly useful for someone trying to find a kidnapping victim. Is there any way to look at an area remotely?

The subject of the *scrying* spell must be a creature. You can study a location (not a specific creature or object) with the *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell. In the latter case, you must specify the location. In the case of *scrying*, you need only specify the subject creature.

When the *scrying* spell shows you a creature, however, you also see the area around the creature, to a distance of about 10 feet (see the paragraph immediately after the saving throw table in the spell description). In game terms, you see the creature and everything within 10 feet of the creature (the bigger the creature the more area you see). This might allow you to see other creatures or features near your subject.

Does the *speak with dead* spell work on destroyed undead? For example, can my cleric kill a zombie and then use *speak with dead* on it to learn who created it? The spell description implies the one-time act of becoming undead ruins any chance the spell will have of working against a creature ever again, even after it is “dead” again.

Speak with dead doesn't work on undead creatures, only on

corpses. An undead creature is not alive, but it's also not a corpse—a corpse is an object. (The undead creature might have been made from a corpse, but it has been transformed into something else, mainly a creature). If you destroy an undead creature, it ceases being a creature and becomes an object once again.

Speak with dead probably won't work on a destroyed undead creature, either, since they're probably too badly damaged to respond to the spellcaster's questions.

Do you have to pay the 5,000 XP cost for a *wish* spell every time you cast it, or just when you duplicate spells with an XP cost? What about *limited wish*? Suppose you use the “undo misfortune” function of the *wish* spell, or any of the other specific functions listed under the spell. Is there an XP cost then?

Whenever you cast a *wish* spell, you pay at least 5,000 XP for the spell. You could pay more XP for the spell if you use it to duplicate a spell with a higher XP cost, or if you use it to create or improve a magic item, as noted in the spell description.

The long bullet list of effects (which includes the “undo misfortune” function) in the *wish* spell description shows the kinds of result you can get from the spell without any great risks. If you use one of these functions, you still pay the *wish* spell's XP cost, but the wish comes out the way you want. If you try to accomplish something your DM thinks is more powerful or difficult than what appears on the bullet list, you risk unintended consequences from the wish, as noted in the spell description. Since the DM is free to devise such unintended consequences, it pays to stick within the limits the spell description sets down.

When you cast a *limited wish* spell, the minimum experience cost is 300 XP, but it could be more, as noted in the spell description.

Monsters

The entries for all the golems in the *Monster Manual* say that golems have magic immunity, which is supposed to allow golems to completely resist most magical and supernatural effects except for specific ones listed in each golem's description. (Most of those heal, slow, or damage the golem.) Can you cast beneficial spells on a golem? For example, can you turn a golem invisible? Can you teleport one? Could you cast *darkness* on a golem? How about *fly* or *reverse gravity*? To put it another way, if you are not trying to directly cause damage or drastically alter the golem (such as with a *polymorph* spell), will the spell work? Clearly, if you cast *darkness* on yourself and the golem attacks you, once it moves into the area of darkness, it can no longer see you. But can you cast *darkness* on the golem? Could a golem use a magic item, such as a *ring of invisibility*?

As noted in each golem's entry, a golem resists any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. (In previous versions of the D&D game, golems were impervious to most supernatural effects as well, but that is no longer the case.) In most cases, you can tell if a spell or spell-like ability works on a golem simply by looking up its spell resistance entry. Let's take a quick look at the effects you've listed:

Invisibility: You cannot turn a golem invisible with any version of the *invisibility* spell. (They all have spell resistance entries of "yes.") This immunity to being made invisible doesn't mean the golem has any special ability to see or detect invisible creatures or objects.

Teleport: The spell resistance entry for the various versions of the *teleport* spell is "no," at least for creatures. Note that when you're using the *teleport* spell, you teleport yourself and other willing creatures. Unless you can command the golem (and you probably don't unless you created the golem), it probably isn't willing to accompany you and would receive a saving throw to resist.

Darkness: You can't cast a *darkness* spell on yourself, on a golem, or any other creature—only on an object (see the spell description). Golems have no special ability to see through darkness (and the spell resistance entry is "no"). The *silence* spell provides a better example of how a golem's magic immunity (and spell resistance in general) works. You can cast *silence* on a creature, and when you do so, spell resistance applies (see the spell description). A *silence* spell automatically fails if you try to cast it on a golem.

Once a *silence* spell is operating, silence reigns throughout the emanation the spell creates. If a golem moves into the emanation, the golem still cannot hear or make any noise.

Fly: You can't use a *fly* spell to make a golem fly (the spell resistance entry is "yes").

Reverse Gravity: This spell's spell resistance entry is "no," so it affects a golem as readily as it affects any other creature or object.

Note that a golem cannot voluntarily lower its magic immunity so that it can receive a harmless spell, but a golem's magic immunity does not extend to magic the golem uses on itself (just as spell resistance doesn't apply to such effects). A golem can make use of any magic item that works continuously or is use activated (provided whoever commands the golem is on hand to put the item on the golem or order the golem to pick it up). Being mindless, a golem cannot use any item activated by command, spell, or spell completion.

Can an undead shadow pass through walls, floors, and ceilings like a ghost can? Can it walk through shadows as in the *shadow walk* spell?

Shadows are incorporeal, so they can move through walls and other solid objects. See the description of the incorporeal subtype in the *Monster Manual*'s glossary.

Shadows do not have a shadow walk ability; if they did it would be mentioned in the shadow's creature description in the *Monster Manual*.

The text on page 289 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* says a supernatural ability cannot be dispelled. Table 8-1 on the next page, however, says it can. Which one is right? If supernatural abilities cannot be dispelled, can they be removed or countered in other ways? What would happen, for example, if a medusa turns my character to stone? Can anything restore my character?

The table is wrong. While you cannot dispel a supernatural ability with the *dispel magic* spell, you can remove or reverse its effects on an area, object (but not one in the supernatural ability user's possession), or creature (but not the ability user itself) in other ways. For instance, the petrified victim in your example can be restored through a *break enchantment* spell or a *stone to flesh* spell. Supernatural effects are not subject to counterspelling, but some of them can be countered in other ways if they have the right descriptor (or if they duplicate spells with the right descriptor). For example, the darkmantle's supernatural darkness ability duplicates the 2nd-level *darkness* spell, which has the darkness descriptor. This ability counters and dispels any light effect of its level or lower, and the 3rd-level *daylight* spell (which counters and dispels all darkness effects of its level or lower) negates the darkness created by a darkmantle's darkness ability.

Likewise, spells such as *dispel evil* can remove supernatural enchantment effects if they duplicate spells that can otherwise be dispelled. For example a *dispel evil* spell will remove a vampire's *dominate person* effect from a victim. Similarly spells that block mental control, such as *protection from evil* or *magic circle against evil*, suppress the effects of a vampire's *dominate person* ability, as noted in their spell descriptions.

Miscellaneous

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* says a character has a 5% chance to expose himself to a poison whenever a character applies it to a weapon or otherwise readies it for use. While the first part is pretty clear, I'm a bit undecided what "otherwise readies it for use" refers to. Does the "it" stand for the poison or does it mean the weapon (so whenever the character readies the poisoned weapon for use) itself?

In this case, "it" applies to the poison. You have a chance to poison yourself when you put the poison on a weapon or when you put it on anything else where someone could be affected by said poison. Note that you also have a chance to poison yourself whenever you get a natural 1 on your attack roll when wielding a poisoned weapon.

Let's say a character encounters a trap and sets it off without being aware of the trap ahead of time. Now let's say you are the DM and you roll for the trap to see if it makes the hit but it fails. If a trap is triggered it cannot miss (unless it was broken or didn't work); it has to be dodged. What are you supposed to tell the player if you are the DM? You cannot just say, "You jump out of the way," because you can't control the PCs actions. How would you solve this dilemma? What should you tell the player?

First, some traps certainly can miss; that's why they're assigned attack values. Perhaps the trap's mechanism doesn't work all that consistently, or perhaps the trap actually tracks and attacks its targets the way a creature would. Any trap that can't miss and has to be dodged should use a Reflex save, not an attack roll.

In any case, you, as the DM, have three basic choices:

Tell the player the trap missed the character. It is not necessary to elaborate.

Tell the player the character dodged the trap. It's perfectly

okay to assume small, involuntary actions on the part of a character, especially when they work to the character's benefit. You do indeed want to avoid dictating any character action that the player normally would think about before actually deciding to do it. For example, it's bad to inform a player that her character has just opened a door or picked up an object—your job as the DM is to explain that the door or object is there and then get on with the game once the player decides what to do about it. On the other hand, it's just as valid to dictate any purely reflex action that might occur as a result of the player's decision. Let's say a character walks past a door without giving it a second glance. If the door bursts open thereafter, it's fine to tell the player that the sudden event startles the character and sends a shiver through her body. The effect is harmless and is simply added as part of the game's narrative. Likewise, if a character picks up an object that turns out to be searing hot, it's okay to inform the player that the character has dropped the object. In this latter case, the player might legitimately object. If so, you can allow the character a check or saving throw (perhaps a Concentration check) to hold onto the item.

Finally, you could simply tell the player nothing. Perhaps the character didn't notice the trap at all; however, a Spot or Listen check might be in order just to determine if the character noticed something amiss.

The table of wind effects in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* has a column that shows a DC. I don't understand this. What is the DC for?

It's the DC for the Fortitude save a creature makes to resist the wind effect shown on the table. For example, in a strong wind, a Tiny or smaller creature has to make DC 10 Fortitude save or be knocked down.