

D&D Next Playtest Update

August 2, 2013

This release of the D&D Next playtest presents updates to many parts of the game, the most significant of which is an overhaul to the classes. Please review the following list of updates.

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

Using This Material

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

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

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

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

Classes

- **All classes have many new class features, and many former features have been heavily revised.**
- Ability score improvements are now integrated into the class tables. The Ability Score Improvement feature can be swapped for feats.
- Many classes have new or updated proficiencies with adventuring gear.
- Spellcasting bonus is now just part of an attack bonus column that all classes have.
- The spellcasting description for all spellcasting classes was clarified to specify more clearly how "spell slots" are intended to work.
- The bard is not included but will appear in a future playtest package.

Barbarian

- The rate based on level advancement for the barbarian's rages, rage damage, and attack bonus was updated.
- The barbarian class now has a choice of paths. The playtest currently presents two: path of the berserker or path of the totem warrior.

Cleric

- The cleric class now has a choice of domains instead of deity. The playtest currently presents three: life, light, and war.

Druid

- The spells per day table for the druid was updated.
- The druid class now has a choice of circles. The playtest currently presents two: circle of the land and circle of the moon.

Fighter

- The fighter class now has a choice of martial paths. The playtest currently presents three: path of the gladiator, path of the knight, or path of the warrior.

Mage

- The wizard is now called the mage.
- The mage has a choice of arcane traditions based on the schools of magic. The playtest currently presents three: school of enchantment, school of evocation, and school of illusion.

Monk

- The monk now uses ki points to channel its abilities.
- The monk class now has a choice of monastic traditions. The playtest currently presents two: way of the four elements and way of the open hand.

Paladin

- The paladin no longer casts spells at 1st level.
- The paladin class now has a choice of oaths. The playtest currently presents only one: oath of devotion.

Ranger

- The ranger no longer casts spells at 1st level.
- The ranger's choice of favored enemy is now more significant in the class. The playtest currently presents two options: path of the dragon slayer and path of the horde breaker.

Rogue

- The rogue class now has a choice of rogue styles. The playtest currently presents two: assassination and thievery

Backgrounds and Lore

- This document replaces the Backgrounds and Skills document.
- Skills were removed and replaced by Fields of Lore. Many classes and races grant benefits to what was formally covered by skills.
- A character now starts with two fields of lore from their background instead of four skills.
- Many backgrounds now grant proficiency with certain types of adventuring gear.
- The knight background was removed.

Bestiary

- The damage for some monsters has been adjusted downward.
- The armor class for some monsters has been adjusted downward.
- The accuracy for some monsters has been adjusted downward.
- The XP and hit points for some monsters has been adjusted.
- A few monster abilities have clarified text or new text.

Character Creation

- The sidebar for customizing ability scores was updated. A player now has 30 points to spend on ability score customization.
- Text for choosing a background was updated to account for fields of lore.
- Clarifications were added for calculating attack bonuses.
- Magic ability modifier was removed.
- The character advancement table was updated to no longer grant feats or ability score bonuses. Those are now accounted for in the Classes and Feats document.

Character Sheet

- A new character sheet replaces the old one. This character sheet was the winner of a recent contest. Congratulations to contest winner Brian Morgen.
- The character sheet is form-fillable. It can now be used more easily on laptops and mobile devices.

DM Guidelines

- Discussion of skills was removed from the document.
- Much of the document was reorganized.
- Exploration rules received a substantial update.
- More specific treasure reward guidelines were added.

Equipment

- The shield is no longer presented as a weapon.
- The weights on many of the armors were changed.
- Many descriptions of weapon properties were clarified or updated.
- Many weapons had their properties, value, weight, and damage revised.
- A sidebar about optional weapons was added.
- New adventuring gear was added, and the cost, weight, and descriptions for many pieces of adventuring gear were revised.
- Many types of adventuring gear now require proficiency to use. Proficiency is typically granted by classes and backgrounds.
- An “Expenses” section was added to discuss character lifestyle.

Feats

- Feats are now optional replacements for the Ability Score Improvement feature that classes receive.
- Specialties were removed and new feats were added.
- Feats now grant substantial and, often times, multiple benefits.

How to Play

- Critical Hit rules were clarified.
- Rules in the “Ranged Attacks” section were clarified to account for magical attacks.
- Rules for “Stabilizing a Creature” were clarified.
- The prone condition was revised.
- In the “Magic” section, the “Range” subsection was clarified, and the definition for the cube area of effect was added.

Magic Items

- The rarity guidelines were revised, and the magic item rarity table was modified.
- Attunement rules were clarified.
- Some minor properties and quirks for magic items were changed.

- The tables for randomly determining the rarity and type of magic armors and magic weapons were updated.
- The format for magic items was changed to call better attention to the item type and rarity.
- Many magic items received updates.

Murder in Baldur’s Gate™

- Monster statistics have been added for this for-sale adventure. They are located in the Adventures and Pre-Gens folder under the Murder in Baldur’s Gate subfolder.

Pre-Generated Characters

- Level 1 and level 2 pre-generated characters have been added to the Adventures and Pre-Gens folder, replacing the previous characters.

Races

- The gnome, half-elf, and half-orc have been integrated into the Races file.
- Humans now receive a bonus language.
- Some races received minor updates to maintain consistency with other rules changes (such as the addition of fields of lore).

Spells

- Many classes had updates to their spell lists.
- Many spells are now part of different schools of magic.
- Some spells received updates to their descriptions, casting time, range, duration, and material components.
- The file now contains the spell *suggestion*.

Looking to Playtest More?

You can also playtest at stores through the D&D Encounters™ official play program. Use the [store locator](#) to find a participating store near you. The upcoming season is *Murder in Baldur’s Gate™*, which starts on August 17th or 18th with a Launch Weekend event.