

# TIME TRAVEL FOR DUNGEONS & DRAGONS



A SUPPLEMENT  
PROVIDING  
TIME TRAVEL RULES

REQUIRES THE USE OF  
THE FIFTH EDITION  
PLAYER'S HANDBOOK,  
DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE  
AND MONSTER MANUAL

# TIME TRAVEL FOR D&D

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## Disclaimer

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The following is a set of House Rules. In this document are alternatives to the normal D&D rules. You will need the fifth edition [Player's Handbook](#), [Dungeon Master's Guide](#) and [Monster Manual](#) to make full sense of this document.

## Copyrights

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This document is intended to be used as alternative house rules to an already standing game system. No information herein is to be copied and sold for profit.

## Introduction

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[Time Travel for Dungeons and Dragons](#) is a supplement to D&D 5E that provides a foundation for introducing time travel into a campaign. The material presented here is intended to help the players by providing a consistent set of rules and to help the DM by providing a logical overview of how time travel works so he can apply his understanding of the concepts involved when dealing with all of the unexpected things that the PCs may do

## Overview

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You should consider everything presented here as one possible way to do time travel in D&D. I hope you will find here a logically consistent way to implement time travel into your game. Adventures involving time travel can be a lot of fun, but they are not for everyone. As the Dungeon Master you should discuss the idea of time travel with your players before introducing it into a campaign. If you think that making it a major part of your campaign would be too disruptive, it might be fun as a one-of. A single jump to the past or future for one specific reason could be tolerated by almost any campaign.

The first section of this tome discusses how spellcasters use their knowledge of the river of time to slide along it to accomplish their time traveling spells.

The second section discusses the two different types of time travel.

The third section talks about time paradoxes. How to avoid them and how to handle them when they occur.

The fourth section is a list of time travel spells.

The final section contains some adventure outlines and some suggestions on various ways to incorporate time travel into your D&D campaign.

## HOW TIME TRAVEL WORKS

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### Temporal Prime

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Time travel spells belong to the conjuration school of magic because the most powerful of these spells can cross planar boundaries. Time travel involves crossing a planar boundary of sorts. Traveling to another point in time involves crossing from the basic Prime Material plane of existence into what is sometimes referred to as the "demiplane of time", but more correctly called "Temporal Prime". The spellcaster then travels along the timestream to exit at another point in time.

Temporal Prime is a pseudo-reality that permeates every plane of existence. There, time exists in a physical state that can be looked at, measured, and moved through. It is from Temporal Prime that a time traveler draws mystical energy, and it is by traveling Temporal Prime that one may journey to the past or future. Temporal Prime is a plane of existence that player characters can enter and adventure in, but in this document it is only used as a vehicle for time related spells.

### The River of Time

Each plane of existence has a separate timestream. In Temporal Prime, these timestreams appear to be separated by vast distances. Each appears as a pale silver cord, or perhaps a river, stretching from one horizon to another in a basically straight course. This timestream is filled with smoke and contains a great number of lifelines. When a spellcaster accesses Temporal Prime, the timestream he will find is the one adjacent to his current plane of existence, this will be the Prime Material plane's timestream unless he is on another plane.

Lifelines appear as cablelike lengths from a quarter-inch to several inches thick. Important events appear as brighter areas along its length. A birth is indicated by a second lifeline splitting from the original, and a death by the gradual fading of the line into a ghostline and then nothing.

### The River of Time is Resistant to Change

The momentum of time resists any radical change and attempts to smooth out the trouble as soon as possible. It rearranges the lives of certain individuals to account for the change without major restructuring. Lifelines, which are usually set in place, writhe and shift slowly as the creatures they represent are molded into the new history. The overall effect is usually a drastic change to short-term history but little change, if any, to long-term

history. It's a gradual process, but eventually everything works out.

By appearing in the past or future, a character automatically causes a slight turbulence that lasts for as long as he remains. The traveler's potential to change events puts this time period into a state of flux, and the longer the traveler remains, the more likely he is to cause a dramatic change.

If the character performs a minor change in this time period (say, preventing the robbery of the town treasury), the turbulence might extend for a few months' worth of distance on Temporal Prime. The area surrounding the lifelines of all affected people would be in a state of readjustment. Slowly, starting at the event point and moving downstream, the turbulence would clear, and the timestream would appear normal.

For a minor change, the time it takes for turbulence to clear is roughly one fourth the objective distance affected. If two months of actual time (the downstream objective distance) were affected, two weeks would pass on Temporal Prime before the turbulence clears. If the event was much more prominent (say, preventing the assassination of a great ruler), it would set up a chain of events that would rearrange lifelines and create turbulence for years.

## Different types of time travel

Time travelers harness mystical energy from Temporal Prime to travel through time. They have developed two different methods of time travel.

### Tactical Time Travel

The first method of time travel is referred to as "tactical". This was the first type of time travel to be discovered and is the easiest to master, although it requires a great deal of energy. As we all float along with the current of time, the tactical time traveler taps into the mystical energy of Temporal Prime to push himself downstream into the future or upstream into the past. As you would imagine, it takes more energy to travel upstream. Tactical time travel is limited to travel along the caster's lifeline. It is impossible to travel this way farther back than his birth or further forward than his projected death. It is generally agreed that one should not travel back in time beyond when your brain was fully formed, about the same time as you became an adult. Realistically, because of the amount of energy required, tactical time travel spells will only propel you along the timestream a few seconds, or minutes at best. Even the most powerful purveyors of time magic cannot move themselves, or others, more than a few days in either direction.

### Strategic Time Travel

Some higher level time travelers have learned how to cross the barrier between the Prime Material plane and Temporal Prime to travel along the timestream and exit into the past or future. This is called "strategic" time travel. This method

has fewer restrictions, but is more dangerous. The only restrictions to strategic time travel is that it can't be used to travel beyond the end or before the beginning of the time stream and cannot travel from one timestream to another. It is generally agreed that travel should go no farther back than the time of the dinosaurs and no farther forward than the time of great technology. Realistically, most strategic time travel is a year or less, but sometimes as much as a couple of hundred years. The danger is that the farther you travel, the greater the risk that you won't be able to return.

Many years ago, when the great wizards were first learning of Temporal Prime, their first successful attempts at casting time strategic travel spells resulted in sending the travelers to their destination naked. After much experimentation and intensive study, they eventually solved this problem by modifying the spell to temporally link the subject of the spell to everything that he is wearing and carrying. This allows him to travel into the future or the past with whatever gear he chooses to take along. The temporal link also prevents him from leaving behind any of those things when he returns.

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## TIME TRAVEL RULES

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### Tactical Time Travel Rules

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Tactical time travel is free from most time travel paradoxes. It moves the timeline forward or back to the appointed time. It is not normally used to travel farther than a single day and cannot be used to travel back to a time before the time traveler was fully grown. Tactical time travel has no "return" spell that allows the traveler to go back to his original time.

### Tactical Time Travel into the Future

In its simplest form, this is how everyone travels through time, one second at a time. For a time traveler that uses tactical time travel to go into the future the time passes so quickly that he seems to instantly appear at the appointed time in the future. To those around him, he disappears and later re-appears. The timestream has moved on and he has moved with it as if he had been in a type of suspended animation during the time that passed. This is often used to "hide" from an otherwise unavoidable encounter or to disappear until the storm passes.

### Tactical Time Travel to the Past

This is often used to correct some mistake in the recent past, or to re-fight a recent battle. The timeline is erased back to the time traveled to. It is like pressing the "rewind" button. Everyone and everything reverts to the way it was then. The time traveler finds himself in the body he had then, where it was then, doing what he was doing then, and everything is as it was then with the exception

that the time traveler, and he alone, recalls future events as they happened before. He is free to repeat his previous actions or change them as he sees fit. Everyone else will do what they did before unless the time traveler intervenes. Purely random events may have different outcomes. All dice will be re-rolled for any battle or game of chance that the time traveler participates in.

The time traveler that travels into the past using tactical time travel will typically continue through time at the normal pace making whatever changes to his previous actions as he chooses. When he arrives at the point in time where he originally chose to travel into the past, he will find that the spell slot that he used to cast the spell is not available so he cannot re-cast that same spell at the same time.

Additionally, he is not permitted to take any action on that round.

## Strategic Time Travel Rules

Strategic time travel is more susceptible to time travel paradoxes than is tactical time travel.

Strategic time travel allows travel both forward and back in time to any point in the past or future. It takes very little mystical energy so it is no more difficult to travel a few centuries than it is to travel a few days.

With strategic time travel, the traveler appears at the appointed time in the past or future, and his original body disappears – usually to return one round later when the traveler returns from his journey. The time traveler arrives at the prescribed time with his body and everything he was wearing or carrying. Any time while on his journey, he can cast a *slide home* spell to “return” to the time he left. When he returns his body is in the condition it was in at the end of his journey and he will bring back with him whatever he took with him on his journey. If he is not holding or carrying something that he had with him when he left, when he returns it appears on the ground near him.

If, at any time during his journey, he is reduced to 0 hit points he will return to his original point on the timestream. His body will re-appear and collapse to the floor. An observer at the time the time travel spell was originally cast will see him disappear only to re-appear one round later and collapse to the floor, unconscious. Starting on the next round after he returns, the character begins his death rolls. If he is also the spellcaster that cast the original spell, everyone else that was effected by the spell also returns. The other party members are in the same physical condition, including the same number of hit points, as they had when the spell ended.

## Strategic Travel to the Future

The time traveler appears at the appointed time in the future, and at the same location as when the spell was cast. The future that he finds is the most likely future based on how events were progressing when he left. The time traveler himself disappeared when the spell was cast and has not been there to effect changes. If he travels to the

same time in the future more than once, each time he will find the future somewhat different. He cannot meet with himself in the future because each trip forward is to a different future that did not have him in it. Remember that when he cast the spell to travel to the future he disappeared. He could choose to never return and to stay in the future. If he does, then from the time he cast the spell until the time he appears in the future he did not exist. If he is the target of a *slide home* spell, or if he is reduced to 0 hit points, his body and everything that he is wearing or carrying when he began his journey will disappear, leaving behind anything he may have picked up while he was in the future.

## Strategic Travel to the Past

The time traveler appears in the past but he has not moved from where he was standing when the spell was cast.

If later, the traveler is the target of a *slide home* spell to go back to where he started, things will not be as they were when he left. Things that he did in the past may affect the way things are when he returns. For example, if he killed someone in the past, not only will that person no longer exist, but everything that that person did after he killed him will never have happened. This includes any children that that person may have had after that point, they were never born.

When the time traveler returns to his own time, he disappears from the past and re-appears one round after he left. He will have with him everything that he was wearing or carrying before, and also anything he may have picked up in the past.

**The first rule of strategic time travel: “You can’t bring anything back from the future and you can’t leave anything in the past. “**

When you travel to the future, you can’t bring anything back with you other than what you took with you. Anything that you picked up and attempted to take back with you falls into one of two categories when you return. Either it already exists so you can’t be holding it because is somewhere else, or it hasn’t been created yet so it doesn’t exist. Everything that you took with you into the future returns with you as well.

When you travel to the past, you can’t leave behind anything that you took with you, but you can bring other things back with you to the present. When you pick something up in the past and then return with it, it disappears along with you and doesn’t exist from the time it disappeared up to the time you re-appear with it. This causes a turbulence in the timestream. All events that occurred around the item during this time will be effected, especially events that were caused by, with, or because of the item. If you return from the past as the result of your

hit points dropping to 0, the only things that return with you are the things you had with you at the beginning of your journey.

Of course, every rule has exceptions. If an item was brought forward from the past, you can take that item back and leave it in the past so long as you leave it sometime after the point in time that it was originally taken.

**The second rule of strategic time travel: - “Magic items that contain extra dimensional spaces become non-magical if taken to the future or to the past.”**

Bags of holding, Handy Haversacks, Portable Holes and all other such items owe their functionality to their opening onto their own nondimensional space. They become non-magical if taken from their original position on the timestream. Each of these spaces, like all other plains of existence, have their own unique timestream. These timestreams run parallel to the one on the Prime Material plain. When you travel to another point in your timestream you don't bring along the portable hole's timestream. It becomes a non-magical bit of cloth until you return with it to the present.

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## TIME TRAVEL PARADOXES

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### The Grandfather paradox

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So... You may ask, “What if I were to accidentally kill my Father or Grandfather?”

To answer this we must first examine the role of the soul in D&D.

When a player character travels in time, his is moving with his soul to a different point on the timestream. All sentient beings, including all player characters, have a soul. Each soul experiences time as an uninterrupted string of events, starting when the soul is created and ending when, or if, it is destroyed.

In Dungeons and Dragons, all souls in the multiverse originate from fonts on the positive energy plain. The timestream of this plain runs parallel to, but separate from, the Prime Material Plain's timestream. When a sentient being is born his soul enters his body, and enters the Prime Material timestream, with his first breath. How long that soul existed before it occupied the newborn and how the choice of host is made is not known. A PC's soul then continues throughout his life and beyond. A PC's soul isn't typically destroyed when he dies and if he is brought back to life, his soul re-joins his body. It is possible for his soul to be moved into an object or another body or travel to other planes and other timestreams. In a very real sense, a player's character's soul is that character. Everything about him can change, but his soul remains and it existed before

his body did. If his newborn body wasn't available for his soul to inhabit because something prevented it from being born, his soul would have gone into another body. This body would have been as close to the same as possible. In order of preference the chosen newborn would have the; same Mother, same Father, same family or close relative, same neighborhood and similar family.

This means that you can't really prevent yourself (meaning your soul) from being born. If your mother or father was killed before you were born your soul would have entered another newborn. At worst you will have been raised in a different family. Regardless of which newborn your soul first inhabited you would now still be the same sex and race. Your physical appearance would be nearly identical and all of your abilities would be the same.

### The Butterfly Effect

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“What if I do something like, say, accidentally stepping on a bug in the past? Couldn't that possibly cause great changes in the future?”

According to this theory, a butterfly flapping its wings in the Caliphate of Ekbir can affect a weather system in the Theocracy of Pale, one tiny change in the past can lead to all kinds of complications that can subtly -- or seriously -- affect the present. However, timestreams in D&D don't work that way. As indicated above, the river of time is resistant to change.

This doesn't mean that you can't effect the present by changing the past, but the changes you make must be deliberate and specific to have much effect on the present .

### Infinite loops

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“What if something travels from the future to the past, and becomes the item that was sent back in time in the first place, thus, having no discernible origin, creating an infinite loop?”

Anyone that travels to the past can't leave anything behind. When he returns to his time he and everything that he brought with him will disappear. (Refer to The first rule of strategic time travel, above.)

### Other Paradoxes

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“Are you trying to tell me that there is no danger of creating a time paradox? What if I caused my past self to be killed? I can think of a dozen other potential ‘impossible’ situations that could be caused by time travel. What about those?”

On the contrary, the potential for creating paradoxes is a constant threat. Using strategic time travel, it is possible for the time traveler to encounter himself. It should be fairly easy to avoid such encounters and avoiding them should be encouraged. Part of the fun for players and DMs alike is how the PCs handle this potential danger.

## Dungeon Master's Guide to Handling a Paradox

First, the DM should provide the players with an easy way to avoid paradoxes. He should stress how important it is to constantly be on guard to avoid your earlier self. Any interaction with your previous self could result in disastrous timestream vortex effects. This simple precaution should avoid most potential paradoxes.

Regardless of precautions, the PCs may end up creating a paradox. The best way to handle this is to remember that the timeline is self-correcting. Any paradox will cause the destruction of the part of the time and space affected by the paradox.

So, if a PC travels back and interacts with his former self, then it could cause himself to disappear. History will erase all traces of the person's existence. Thus, the paradox will have never have occurred from the historical viewpoint .

"Well, that sucks. If every time the player's character creates a time paradox they have to roll up a new character this won't be much fun."

Okay, here are a few tips on how the DM can handle time paradoxes that won't result in a total party kill situation.

**Tip 1** - Remember that only strategic time travel into the past can create a temporal paradox.

Traveling into the future cannot effect the present and tactical time travel into the past rewinds everything back so there is no chance of a paradox.

**Tip 2** - Have all changes to the timestream take effect only after the party returns to its original time.

This won't stop a paradox from happening, but at least it won't interrupt the adventure until the time traveling trip is over. This also gives the DM some time to decide how the PC's actions will change the future. After they return, discuss with them how their actions have changed the present.

**Tip 3** - Let most changes to the timestream happen the way the players intended.

Players can come up with some very clever ideas. If what they propose isn't logical, point out the problems and work with them to arrive at a solution they can live with. This isn't a physics class, it is a game.

**Tip 4** - Make the consequences be proportional to the severity of the act.

Don't remove the player's character from history for simply speaking to his past self. Of course, if he insists on killing his former self, just make sure he understands the consequences.

**Tip 5** - Restrict time travel to the future or to the distant past.

If they travel to a time before any of the characters or any of their known relatives have been born the chance of accidentally creating a paradox is greatly diminished.

## TEMPORAL ANCHOR

Some items, such as the bejeweled dagger used to assonate a great king and that minstrels sang songs about, have an innately strong connection to the timestream. These items resist time travel. If such an item is taken to the past or to the future, it creates a strong pull back to the point on the timestream it was taken from. Such an object is called a temporal anchor.

A temporal anchor isn't a magical item in the usual sense. As long as the item is traveling at its normal pace along its timestream it is no different than any other normal item. One hour after being taken to another point on the timestream, either to the past or to the future, it ceases to be inert and becomes an active temporal anchor.

The *slide home* spell requires using an active temporal anchor as a focus for the spell .

## TIME TRAVEL SPELLS

### Spell Descriptions

When a character cast a time travel that only effects himself, the spell will be described in relation to the way in which it affects those around him upon his return. There is no reason to role-play the trip itself. Doing so would only slow the game and lessen the fun for the other players. So if a character goes back in time to change something, we will only be concerned with the effects of that change. The same is true if he travels into the future. This will typically to be for information gathering, so the spell will be described in terms of what information he can retrieve .

## Tactical Time Travel Spells

The simplest time travel spell is used by the time traveler to move himself forward a short distance in time. This is called the *Spring Forward* spell. With it, the caster can move forward a short distance into the future and remain undetectable for the duration of the spell. Spellcasters sometimes refer to this as a “temporal sequester”.

### Spring Forward

*1st-level Conjuraction*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S

Range: 25 feet

Duration: 1 round/level, see text

You can send yourself, forward in time to a point in the near future of your choosing, no further ahead than one round per caster level. The amount must be decided before the spell is cast. You will seem to disappear, then reappear after the duration of this spell expires. To you, it will appear as if no time has passed. Because you are sent forward in time, this spell not only prevents divination spells from working to detect or locate you, it also renders you invisible to any form of sight or seeing.

If the space from which you departed is occupied upon your return, you will appear in the closest unoccupied space.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level, you can attempt to affect one willing creature, or one object weighing 300 lb. or less. As a 5th level spell, you can affect all willing creatures within 10 feet. When cast using a 7th level slot, the duration extends to one day. When cast as a 9th level spell, the duration extends to 10 days.

Forcing others forward a short distance in time can be a devastating tactic during combat. This is the purpose of the *Push Forward* spell. As a variant, if the target creature successfully resists the spell, a contest is conducted between the castor and the target creature based on their Wisdom scores. If the target creature wins the contest, then it is the spellcaster who is pushed through time .

### Push Forward

*3rd-level Conjuraction*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S

Range: 25 feet

Duration: Instantaneous

The subject is thrown forward in time up to 1 round per level of the caster. The amount must be decided before the spell is cast. The spell removes the creature from reality for a limited time, allowing the caster to deal with other problems or prepare a welcome for the returning creature. The affected creature is aware of no passage of time. To the subject, everything seems to suddenly shift about. If a physical presence is occupying the space to be returned to, the creature is displaced slightly on return.

The subject reappears in exactly the same orientation and condition as before .

When a spellcaster uses a tactical time travel spell to go back in time, it is usually to go a short way back to change some action he performed. The *Fall Back* spell rewinds time back to a point in the past of your choosing. You are the only one who remembers the events that happened beyond the time you returned to. Everything that happened before will happen again in the same way as it did last time unless changed by your actions. Rather than role playing it all out, you simply select the one action you want to take back or change. You then continue forward in time until you get back to the time that you cast the spell. When you go back in time, you have the spell slot missing that you used to cast the spell.

### Fall Back

*3rd-level Conjuraction*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S

Range: Self

Duration: Instantaneous

You can take back an action that you performed within the last 5 rounds or insert an additional action if timing permits. You could take back something said or decide not to kiss the king's daughter. You could not insert another attack into a combat round, but could insert one into the round before combat. If an action is taken back that would've prevented combat (insulting the goblin king) or another major event, the caster and Dungeon Master must work out a reasonable course of events that would make up for the lost time .

**At Higher Levels:** The number of rounds back that the caster can affect is equal to twice the level of the spell slot used. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level, you can go back up to one month and can change any one event that you did personally of up to one hour in duration that may affect the present. Such an event could be changing one memorized spell for a more useful one, having bought a cast of ail instead of a cast of oil, or deciding that, instead of insulting the orc's chieftain (who has been harboring a grudge, and now the characters need his help), you insulted their finest warrior. It is the Dungeon Master's call as to how the change proceeds forward, if at all. Often things will not work out as neatly as the caster might hope. The orc chieftain could still bear a grudge (that the warrior was insulted), and the warrior might wish now for personal satisfaction.

Higher level spellcasters can use the *Déjà Vu* spell to take the entire party back to re-do an entire battle, or part of one, or avoid a bad situation. In this case, you will re-play everything forward from the point traveled back to. This is a true do-over for the players and over use of it could wreck a campaign by making the party feel unbeatable. You may want to keep this spell from the player characters and put it in the hands of a friendly NPC. Or have them find an artifact which contains only a few *Déjà Vu* spells.

### Déjà Vu

*6th-level Conjuraction*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S, M (silver coins or silver items with a total value of at least 6,000 gp.)

Range: Self

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell rewinds back time to a point in the past of your choosing, no further back than one round per caster level. You and all willing creatures within 10 feet arrive with a strong sense of Déjà Vu as they remember the events that happened last time in what is now your future. Everyone is in the same position and the same physical condition as they were then. Everything that happened before will happen again in the same way as it did last time unless changed by the party's actions. Purely random events may have different outcomes. All dice will be re-rolled for any battle or game of chance that you participate in.

## Strategic Time Travel Spells

**With the simplest strategic time travel spell, the spellcaster goes into a trancelike state and his consciousness slips from reality into Temporal Prime. He will then mentally move forward along the timestream to the brightest spot on his personal lifeline which will correspond to an important event in his life. His consciousness slips back into the Prime Material plane at this point in the future and he can observe the actions of his future self and others for a few minutes. He is then pulled back to the present and wakes with knowledge of the event. Only a few seconds of real time will have passed. This is the *Precognitive Sense* spell.**

### Precognitive Sense

*3rd-level Conjunction*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Components:** V, S, M (a piece of rose quartz held to the caster's forehead)

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You gain general knowledge of a single event to come. The event must affect the caster in some way. (An event that would affect another character in the party might count, especially if you rely on other party members for safety.) The range is six hours into the future per caster level, and the spell centers on the most important event during that time. Information is frequently misleading and there is always a 10% chance that the information is wrong.

**The *Prophecy* spell is a more powerful version of the *Precognitive Sense* spell. The primary difference is that you can follow the lifeline of another person. At higher levels, you can attempt to follow the timestream along the path of a town or kingdom.**

### Prophecy

*5th-level Conjunction*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Components:** V, S, M (the root of a plant with hallucinatory properties. For the higher level version, a gem worth 5,000 gp must be buried near the center of the location)

**Range:** Touch

**Duration:** 1 minute

You enter a trance and, through visions of the future, attempt to divine an important event that shall come to pass. The event must directly affect the person touched, and this person cannot be the caster. The vision fades out and returns several times over the spell's duration, and much of it is vague and open to interpretation.

This spell leaves the caster physically drained and unable to move (treat as Stunned) until he completes a long rest.

A caster cannot cast this spell more than once to prophesize the same event - at least not until the character reaches his next level.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 9th level, you may attempt to divine a prophecy concerning an event affecting a location on

the grand scale of a town or kingdom. There is a low probability that this succeeds (only 1% per level of the caster), but the attempt can be made once per day.

**The major time travel spell is called *Timereaver*. With it, a powerful spellcaster can take himself and his traveling companions to any point on the timestream. The timestream has no milestones to indicate days or years which makes arriving at your desired point in time difficult. You will often miss your target date. The farther you travel in time the farther from your intended arrival date are you likely to arrive. Travelers along the timestream tend to be attracted to bright spots, so if you don't end up at your intended date, you will likely reenter reality at a point in time where some interesting event is happening, or is about to happen .**

### Timereaver

*8th-level Conjunction*

**Casting Time:** 1 minute

**Components:** V, S, M (silver coins or other silver items with a total worth of at least 10,000 gp.)

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You and all willing creatures within 10 feet are sent backward or forward in time. It encases those affected in a null-time bubble and then moves along the timestream, reenters reality at the desired date, and releases the travelers. To the travelers, no time has passed. The caster specifies the point in time to be transported to. The time chosen must be one or more days into the past or future. The travelers will bring with them all objects that they are carrying or wearing. They will end up as close as possible to their current location. The spellcaster must make a DC 20 Wisdom check to arrive at the exact date desired. If you should miss, the DM selects at what day you re-appear. It could be in the past or future in relation to the target date. At the DM's discretion, the actual arrival date might be within 10% of the target date, which would be within 10 days of the target date for a trip of 100 days, 10 years for a 100 year trip, etc

**After adventuring in the past or future, you will want to use a *slide home* spell to return to your original point on the timestream. If you use a *timereaver* spell to return, not only will it cost you the required material component, but you will risk missing your return date. The only catch is that the *slide home* spell requires that you have a temporal anchor to use as a focus. Also of note, the person that casts the *slide home* spell does not have to be the one who sent you into the past or future in the first place.**

### Slide Home

*6th-level Conjunction*

**Casting Time:** 1 action

**Components:** V, S, M (an active temporal anchor that is linked to your original time as a focus. When a temporal anchor is taken into the past or future, it will be temporarily inert for one hour.)

**Range:** Self

**Duration:** Instantaneous

This spell sends time travelers back to where they came from. It can affect you and all willing creatures within 10 feet. It encases those affected in a null-time bubble and then moves along the timestream, reenters and releases the travelers to their original location in time and space, only one round later. To anyone that witnessed your original departure, you will appear to vanish, only to



re-appear at the same location one round later. Returning to your previous time does not heal any hit points or refresh your body in any other way. If you are returning from the past, you will return with all that you are holding or carrying (up to your maximum carrying capacity). If you are returning from the future, you will return with only those items you were wearing or carrying when you left your original time.

The spell will automatically fail for all creatures that have not traveled from the same point in time as the temporal anchor.

**The ancient spellcaster that first learned to create time portals is lost to history. Those who use them today simply memorize the sigils necessary to open doorways to existing portals. No knowledge of Temporal Prime or of the timestream is necessary to cast the time portal spell. The knowledge no longer exists of how to create a doorway to a time that does not contain a permanent portal.**

### Time Portal

7th-level *Conjuration (ritual)*

Casting Time: 1 minute

Components: V, S

Range: Touch

Duration: 2 Rounds

You draw a 3 foot wide and 7 foot tall doorway on a wall or other vertical surface inscribed with sigils that link your location in time and space to a permanent time portal of your choice whose sigil sequence you have learned. In a few obscure or hidden places in forgotten temples or tombs at various points in time there have existed (or will exist) permanent time portals inscribed somewhere within their confines.

Upon casting the spell, a shimmering portal opens within the doorway you drew and remains open until the end of your next turn. Any creature that enters the portal instantly steps out of the destination doorway into the nearest unoccupied space.

Time advances at the same speed at both ends of the portal, so when you return, the amount of time that will have passed here will equal to the amount of time you spent on the other side.

A sigil sequence is a string of magical runes arranged in a particular pattern. Each permanent time portal has a unique sigil sequence. When you first gain the ability to cast this spell, you learn two sigil sequences to destinations determined by the Dungeon Master. One of these will exist at your current time, but in some hidden location and the other will exist in either the future or the past and at a different location. You can learn additional sigil sequences during

**To assure a safe return from their time travel adventures, spellcasters go to great lengths to obtain a temporal anchor to assure that they can return safely from their adventures. But, just because you have a 100 year old dog collar that belonged to your great uncle Fred, doesn't mean that it can safely be used as a temporal anchor. That is where the *detect temporal anchor* spell comes in handy. When cast at higher levels, it can be very useful in identifying an inactive temporal anchor that will become active when you take it with you on your time travels. When cast at lower levels it only detects active temporal anchors, so it can be useful if you misplace yours while you are traveling in time, but it is used most often to identify time travelers from the future (or from the past). Because these items are so useful, travelers from another point on the timestream will most likely have one with them.**

your adventures. You can commit a new sigil sequence to memory after studying it for a minute.

You can create a permanent time portal by casting this spell every day for one year in one location. You need not use the doorway to travel to the other time when you cast the spell in this way.

## General Time Travel Spells

### Detect Temporal Anchor

3rd-level *Divination*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S

Range: 25 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

For the duration, you can detect the presence of an active temporal anchor within 25 feet of you, and such items cannot become hidden from you.

The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal, a thin sheet of lead, or 3 feet of wood or dirt.

**At Higher Levels:** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level, you can detect a temporal anchor that is not active, even if it is in its anchor point in the timestream.

**The silvery sphere created by the *temporal sphere* spell blocks all access to Temporal Prime, which prevents any tactical or strategic time spell from functioning.**

### Temporal Sphere

6th-level *Abjuration*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S

Range: 100 feet

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Choose a point within range. All time travel and time related spells are blocked within a shimmering silvery 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point for the duration. Any attempt to travel into this location from the past or future will fail.

Time continues normally for creatures within the sphere. The sphere cannot be moved, but if a creature inside the sphere moves beyond its boundary, they may then cast time spells, or have time spells cast upon them. The spell blocks travel in either direction through time portals located within the sphere.

**The simple little *true time* cantrip can be of great usefulness if a spell sends you to the wrong point along the timestream. The spellcaster makes a momentary connection with Temporal Prime and instantly knows exactly where he is along the timestream. He can translate that into the exact time and date.**

### True Time

*Divination Cantrip*

Casting Time: 1 action

Components: V, S

Range: Self

Duration: Instantaneous

You can unerringly ascertain the current local time and date.

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## A DM'S GUIDE TO RUNNING A CAMPAIGN THAT INCLUDES TIME TRAVEL

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### So Now What?

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The previous sections have focused on how time travel works. Below are some suggestions on how this can be used in an adventure or a campaign.

“Time Travel is ... was ... is going to have been .... confusing.”

### Make it Your Own

First of all, don't think that you need to use everything. If you find one idea that you think would be fun to use one time in an adventure, go for it!

Second, feel free to change anything that you want in order for it to work better with the campaign you have in mind. For instance, you could change the *Timereaver* spell so that it becomes a low level spell that has no material component and unerringly takes you to your intended point on the timestream. Or, rather than a spell, it could be a Time Machine of your design. Or in a magic item with only a certain number of charges. Or it could also travel to other locations and/or other planes of existence. If you change the spells you should keep this in mind: Tactical time travel spells into the future simply fast-forward everybody's time but your own. Tactical spells into the past rewind time and it all gets done over again and you can't go back farther than when you became an adult. For strategic time spells, you move into the demiplane of time, called Temporal Prime. While there, you see the timestream as a physical stream and you can move along it in either direction to emerge at any point in time. Let your imagination be your guide. Try to keep game balance in mind, but not at the expense of a good idea.

### Temporal Anchor as a Plot Hook

As presented in the previous sections, a “temporal anchor” is required to unerringly return from time travels. This presents you with many opportunities for adventure.

First, you will need to find one. You can use the *Detect Temporal Anchor* spell to identify one but they are not common and you must first locate something that you think might be one. Think of objects that you would typically see in a museum. These are items that were present during some important historical event. Think of it like this; every physical object is resistant to time travel to some degree. Some more than others. There is a threshold of time travel

resistance that an object must reach for it to be used as a temporal anchor. A crown or scepter used in the coronation of the king would be an obvious candidate, but so would be the castle where it was held, and the mountain it sets upon. To be a useful temporal anchor it needs to be something the character can easily carry; the knocker not the door, a gem that was the idol's eye not the idol. Good ideas for time anchors would be a book, a comb, a piece of jewelry, an old hat, or a horse shoe. As long as it has a good story to go with it. It should be a well-known story. The more people that know the story, the stronger the item's link to its timestream. The story may be so old that it is thought to be a fairytale. The best type of item to be a temporal anchor would be a magic item, perhaps a weapon.

The adventurers may know of several items that might be temporal anchors. Of course, each would require an adventure to locate or retrieve, and each would only have a chance of actually being a temporal anchor once it was found. It might be buried in a lost tomb, held by reclusive monks in a distant monastery, last known to be in the possession of adventurers who disappeared while on an uncharted island, etc.

A time traveler could arrive at our adventurer's time and lose his temporal anchor, perhaps it is stolen. He might engage our heroes to find or retrieve it for him.

Thieves from the future could be traveling to our time to steal things. Our heroes could use *detect temporal anchor* spells to help identify the time travelers. And they could use a *temporal sphere* spell to keep them from escaping back to their own time.

Say our heroes have their temporal anchor item and travel to another time. While there what if their temporal anchor is destroyed or stolen? Perhaps it is taken to another time? The campaign becomes a “lost in time” type of campaign where every time “jump” takes them to a different time as they try to find their way home.

### Time Portal as a Plot Hook

A number of time portals were created centuries ago, at various locations in time and space. Our heroes are tasked with finding something important and after much effort they finally obtain the sigil sequence required to open the doorway to the place and time where the next clue can be found. While there they eventually find another sigil sequence to open another doorway. Rinse and repeat. You can take them from one time period/adventure to another. Some can even be on different planes. As they adventure they learn that more is at stake than they first thought. Eventually it is up to them to save the universe.

### Using Tactical Time Travel Spells

You could have a campaign that didn't use any strategic time travel spells at all and concentrated solely on tactical spells. The PCs would be exceedingly difficult to defeat as they could go back in time to fix mistakes or re-play any

encounter that didn't go well. Most DMs wouldn't want to run such a campaign, but you and your players might enjoy it. Of course, you could always make sure they had opponents that could do the same thing. I think this would be DM hell. Limiting the PCs ability to use tactical time travel spells might be best. Your players may holler "foul" if you put them up against opponents that use these spells and the PCs don't have them.

## Time Travel Campaign Ideas

You can add a little time travel into any campaign, or your entire campaign can be centered on time travel. The former is easiest, the latter requires more preparation on the DMs part before the beginning of the campaign. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1) The magic of time travel is well established and tightly controlled. The PCs join a secret organization that has taken it on themselves to control the use of time travel and prevent its abuse. They will be sent on various missions. [I borrowed these ideas from GURPS Time Travel]

a) They may be guards and/or guides for researchers whose purpose is not to change the past but to observe or document past or future events. The researchers themselves may have hidden goals or personalities that endanger the mission.

b) They may be sent with the specific objective of making changes to the timestream. This usually means that the past has already been altered, by enemy action or by accident, and has to be returned to normal

c) They may be sent to bring something back (forward?) from the past, either for temporary study (in which case another mission may be necessary to replace it) or to save it from destruction. The agents may need to plant a copy of the item, or otherwise create a diversion from the burglary.

2) An evil organization is using time travel to make changes in their past in order to profit by it. Either monetarily or politically (or both). These changes are causing major disturbances in the timestream and they must be stopped. Perhaps it starts small with the PCs tasked to catch a thief. They discover that the thief that appeared from nowhere and made off with a work of art came from the future. The PCs end up chasing these bad guys across time as they discover that their leader's intention is to destroy this timestream.

3) A powerful wizard asks for the PCs help in recovering a lost or stolen item. It turns out that the wizard is from the future and used a *Timereaver* spell to get here. The item is his temporal anchor. This could be a good way to introduce time travel into an existing campaign. The wizard sought out the PCs because he knows them by their future reputation. He teaches them about Temporal Prime and time travel. He can give them time travel spells in exchange for their services. I wouldn't have him take an active part in the PCs adventures, but he could become a major NPC that could

be the catalyst for many adventures while providing them with guidance and information.

## The Timeline

In some ways it is easier to run a modern day time travel campaign than a typical D&D one. At least that way you already have a history to refer to. If you say you are going back to find out who Jack the ripper really was, to stop Hitler, or to talk to Shakespeare - the players know what you are talking about. For a typical fantasy campaign the players start out knowing nothing of the world their characters are in, much less about its history. It is up to the DM to provide them with that information as needed. If an evil villain traveled to the past and made a major change to the timestream, it is up to you to make your players understand why that change was bad and why their characters would care. But first, you must know what the history and, to some extent, the future of your campaign world is. If you are using a published campaign world you may be able to find that others have already done much of this work for you. If you are creating your own world it is all up to you.

The official D&D setting for the fifth edition is the Forgotten Realms. A great resource for a timeline history of the Realms is "A Grand History of the Realm" published in 2006. Here is an overview where I have added some pre and post history periods. All dates are DR (Dalereckning Calendar) used in the Forgotten Realms.

**-570,000,000 Cambrian Period** First invertebrates (The timestream does not continue beyond this date)

**-435,000,000 Ordovician Period** Mollusks, jawless fishes

**-434,000,000 Silurian Period** fishes with jaws and first land plants

**-410,000,000 Devonian Period** Insects, amphibians

**-360,000,000 Mississippian Period** Reptiles, giant insects

**-330,000,000 Pennsylvanian Period** Reptiles continue to develop

**-290,000,000 Permian Period** Seed-bearing plants appear, trilobites die out

**-240,000,000 Triassic Period** Dry and hot, First dinosaurs, turtles, crocodiles

**-205,000,000 Jurassic Period** Warm, humid and wet with much of the land covered with ferns. Birds, largest dinosaurs

**-138,000,000 Cretaceous Period** Warm with high sea levels. Horned and armored dinosaurs. Flowering plants appear

**-63,000,000 Oligocene Period** First apes

**-55,000,000 Eocene Period** Horses, camels

**-24,000,000 Miocene Period** Mammals diversify

**-5,000,000 Pliocene Period** Human-like apes

**-2,000,000 Start of the Great Ice Age** First humans, invented bone points, spears

**-500,000 Stone Age** Man learns to make fire, language begins to develop

**-37000 End of the Great Ice Age**

**-3500 to -30000 The Days of Thunder** The earliest days of recorded history, when humans still hid in caves. This is the time of the fabled creator races and their dominion over Faerûn.

**-30000 to -24000 The Time of Giants and Dragons** The empires of the creator races fade into memory.

**-24000 to -12000 The First Flowering** The great elven civilizations of Faerûn reach their peak during this age. With the elves' success against the orcs and dragons and giants, the other races thrive in safety and begin the slow climb on civilization.

**-12000 to -9000 The Crown Wars of the Elves** The two greatest events of the Crown Wars that still have impact on the Realms of any era are the Dark Disaster and the Descent of the Drow. The Dark Disaster utterly destroyed the forest realm of Miyentia, leaving the blasted plains that are now the High Moors. Perhaps due to the savagery of the Crown Wars or other factors long lost to time, the Dark Elves became corrupt during this era, broke away from their brethren, and after much warfare and cruelty they descended beneath the planet's surface to become the Deep Elves, the drow.

**-9000 to -3000 The Founding Time** This era signals the rise of all the humanoid civilizations, as the many dragons and giants were long overthrown and the elven wars no longer loomed over everyone as a threat. The elven realms of Evereska and Evermeet grow by colonization along with other realms, from the human Unther or Coramshan to the dwarven realms of High Shanatar or Oghrann.

**-3000 to 1000 Age of Humanity** With the elven and dwarven empires in decline, this era marks a dramatic increase in human expansion on Toril.

**1 DR Start of the Dalereckining Calendar** - The Standing Stone is raised by the elves of Cormanthyr and the Dalefolk.

**1000 to Present The Present Age** This is an age of exploration and discovery, when new continents are discovered to the west and trade is reestablished with the east. This is a time when the Great Glacier retreats uncovering the realms of Vaasa and Damara. And it is the age of the Godswar, when the power of the gods rested firmly in the hands of their faithful.

## 1481 The Current Date

**1500 to 1550 The Black Death** About 1/3rd of the population dies.

**1550 to 1600 The Great Famine** Crime, death, disease, infanticide, and cannibalism. Dwarves and other non-human races retreat to hidden places.

**1600 to 1650 The Renaissance** Expansion of art and knowledge. Gunpowder, cannons and one shot weapons. Elves leave the material plane.

**1650 to 1700 Age of Enlightenment** Scientific theories and discoveries are encouraged. People accused of practicing magic or witchcraft are tortured and killed.

**1700 to 1800 The Industrial Revolution** Steam engine, spinning jenny, cotton gin

**1800 to 1850 Age of invention** Light bulbs, telephone, telegraph, radio, sewing machine, dynamite

**1850 to 1900 Steampunk** Earth is attacked from space.

**1900 to 1950 World Wars** Most of World involved in Wars. Ending in a great depression.

**1950 to 2000 Age of Flight** Airplanes, gasoline-powered automobiles, first computers, first attempts at space travel

**2000 to 2050 Information Age** Everyone has access to all information, entertainment and communication through hand held computers. Space tourism begins.

**2050 to 3000 Space Age** Faster than light travel is discovered. Space exploration begins.