As Good as His Blade

Expanded Weapon Properties

REMEMBER THOSE FIRST FEW GAMES YOU played, where every weapon the enemies carried was considered loot? New players especially like to carry a variety of weapons, but eventually most characters settle on one and use it exclusively for the rest of their career. But there are also veteran players that desire more variety in their arsenal. The following

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list of weapon properties is designed to give weapons something special to distinguish them from each other. After all, wasn't everyone saying that there should be a difference between a spear and a trident? Now's your chance to make that happen.

While many of the properties add beneficial options to some weapons, there are others that a GM may wish to introduce to limit the potential of some weapon choices. If you think that two-handed weapons are just too powerful, properties like Unbalancing could help to 'balance' your game.

Below are some new weapon properties, as well as some variants on existing properties. Finally, some properties require introducing other small subsystems or minor rules to your game, and are covered separately.

New Weapon Properties

Barbed
Weapons with this property remain attached to the target on a hit.

The target, or a creature within 5 feet of them, can attempt to remove the barbed weapon without harm by taking an action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check. On a successful result the barbed weapon is removed. On a failure, it is still removed, but the target takes damage from weapon upon removal.

If the attacker still wields the weapon, they can also remove it as an action. This deals automatic weapon damage (no modifiers are added) to the target.

Example weapons. Harpoon, kaginawa.

Defensive (#)
Where # is applied as a bonus to AC (*e.g.*, defensive [2]).

Whenever you use this weapon to make an attack, the defensive bonus is lost until the start of your next turn.

When wielding two defensive weapons, only the highest bonus is applied to your AC.

Example weapons. This property is most frequently applied to spiked shields, allowing them to be used as weapons, but could also be applied to defensive off-hand weapons such as sai, a fencing dagger (*main-gauche*), and basket-hilted swords.

Double
This weapon is essentially two melee weapons joined as one. Each end retains the properties of the original weapons. These cannot include two-handed weapons.

If both ends have the light property, this weapon can be used to make a two-weapon fighting attack and benefits from the two-weapon fighting style.

Double weapons require two hands to use but do not have the two-handed property, and cannot benefit from features that affect two-handed weapons. Similarly, weapons with the two-handed property cannot be given the double property. If the weapon has reach, only one attack per round can benefit from this property.

Example weapons. Double shortsword, spear-axe, double battleaxe, quarterstaff.

Readied
Once per round, when a creature uses the Dash action (or benefits from extra movement) to move within the reach of your held weapon with the readied property, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that target with that weapon. If you hit, this attack automatically becomes a critical hit.

You cannot use this feature if you have a hostile creature able to take actions within 5 feet of you.

Example weapons. Halberd, longspear, halberd, ranseur.

Unbalancing
If you make a melee attack with this weapon and miss, you become unbalanced, granting advantage to the next attack against you before your next turn. You may spend your bonus action to recover your balance.

Example weapons. Weapons with this quality typically have a lot of weight at the opposite end of the handle. Many tools used as weapons would be appropriate. Consider applying this property to weapons such as: greataxe, maul, mattock, miner's pick, ball and chain, and large improvised weapons such as a body.

Wrap-Around

Weapons with the wrap-around property ignore shield AC bonuses and bonuses from weapons with the defensive property.

Example weapons. Flexible or curved weapons, such as flails, chains, nets, sickles, and certain natural attacks like tentacles (including weapons that imitate natural weapons).

Modifying Existing Weapon Properties

Entangling

On a hit, the attacker can choose to impose the restrained condition on the target until the target escapes. To escape, the target, or another creature within 5 feet, must spend an action to make a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Alternatively, the entangling weapon or its trailing line can be destroyed by dealing the weapon 5 or more slashing damage (AC 10.) A weapon with the entangling property can only be attacked when it is restraining a target.

Targets two size categories larger than the attacker or targets with formless bodies are immune to this property.

For weapons with a trailing line, like the whip or harpoon, the target can move, but only in the direction of the attacker. Furthermore, if the target remains entangled by a weapon with a trailing line, the attacker can use their action to initiate a Strength contest and, if successful, can pull the entangled target up to 10 feet towards them.

Example weapons. Bolas, net.

Reach

In addition to the ability to hit targets further away, a GM may wish to impose the following feature for reach weapons.

Attacks made against targets within 5 feet are made with disadvantage.

Additional Properties

The following properties require more complex rules adjustments.

Armor Penetration (#)

When used against a target that benefits from armor, you add the # bonus to your attack roll. This bonus cannot exceed the target's AC –10, not counting AC bonuses from Dexterity.

This property increases the level of complexity in combat, but adds a layer of tactical depth to the

fifth-edition system. Be sure that you and your players are comfortable with this level of complexity in your game before implementing the armor penetration property.

Example weapons. This property is for types of weapons that slip through cracks in armor or can pound straight through a simple suit of armor. Weapons in a typical fantasy game have a maximum of armor penetration (3). Games that involve firearms or futuristic technology may have weapons with significantly higher values. Penetrating weapons include picks, composite or recurve bows, crossbows, mauls, stilettos, and poleaxes.

Awkward (#)

A critical fumble results on a natural roll represented by # or lower on the attack roll.

Example: A miner's pick has awkward (2), which means a critical fumble will occur on a natural attack roll of 2 or lower.

Apply this property to large tools and improvised weapons, especially those that have more than one part that can cause damage, or to weapons that have several moving parts.

Example weapons. Miner's pick, ladder, ball and chain, a chair, repeating crossbow (which might jam).

Many games do not use critical fumbles, and this feature could simply extend the range of the automatic miss rule. Consider this easy fumble rule: whenever a critical fumble is rolled, the creature who rolled the fumble can take no further actions, including reactions or movement, until the start of their next turn.

Disarming

When a weapon with the disarming quality would deal damage, you may instead choose to deal no damage and force the target to make a DC 10 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target is disarmed.

Example weapons. Sai, main-gauche, nunchaku, ranseur.

Fragile

Each time the minimum damage is rolled with this weapon, it takes a temporary –1 penalty to its damage rolls. If the penalty drops to –5 before the weapon is repaired, it is destroyed permanently.

Example weapons. This property can be used to represent primitive weapons made from wood, stone and bone, such as flint-tipped spears, and could also be applied thin blades like the rapier.

Each –1 penalty takes someone with the appropriate tool proficiency one hour to repair.

Toggle (#)

Weapons with this property have a trailing line on the weapon, or have reach and can connect to targets. They must have a means to attach to a target: the barbed and/or entangling properties.

When a toggle weapon with the barbed or entangling property hits a target, a trailing line connects the target to the attacker. This line can be broken by a creature that takes an action to deal 5 or more slashing damage against AC 10, or by breaking the line with a DC 15 Strength check.

The attacker decides how long the toggle line is (up to # feet). A target attached to the line can only move beyond this distance from the weapon's wielder by making an opposed Strength check against the wielder. If successful, the target can move away. The wielder has two choices if the target moves away: they can simply drop the weapon, in which case it is dragged away by the target, or they can spend a reaction to release or pull free the weapon, which then remains in their hands. (Pulling free a barbed weapon from a connected target deals the target damage as normal.)

Example weapons. Harpoon, kaginawa, whip.

Tripping

When a weapon with the tripping quality would deal damage, you may instead choose to deal no damage and attempt to shove the target. Your Strength check has advantage when taking the shove action in this way.

Example weapons. Flail, hafted hook, guisarme, whip, bolas, chain.

New Weapons

These new weapons have been designed using the new properties presented above.

Simple Melee Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Ball and chain	2 gp	1d6 bludgeoning	8 lb.	Awkward (2), heavy, tripping, unbalancing, wrap-around
Fishing spear	2 gp	1d4 piercing	3 lb.	Fragile, reach, thrown (range 30/120)
Harpoon	5 gp	1d6 piercing	4 lb.	Barbed, heavy, thrown (range 30/120), toggle (120), versatile (1d8)
Miner's pick	2 gp	1d10 piercing	10 lb.	Armor penetration (1), awkward (2), heavy, two-handed, unbalancing
Scythe	5 gp	1d8 slashing	6 lb.	Awkward (3), heavy, two-handed, wrap-around

Simple Ranged Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Bolas	5 gp	1d4 bludgeoning	2 lb.	Awkward (2), entangling, thrown (range 20/60), tripping

Martial Melee Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Double shortsword	25 gp	1d6 piercing/1d6 piercing	5 lb.	Double, finesse (both ends), light (both ends)
Dwarven spear-axe	15 gp	1d6 piercing/1d8 slashing	6 lb.	Double, versatile (both ends)
Kaginawa	10 gp	1d4 bludgeoning/1d4 piercing	2 lb.	Awkward (2), barbed (grapple), double, entangling, heavy, reach, toggle (10), tripping, wrap-around
Longspear	20 gp	1d10 piercing	6 lb.	Heavy reach, readied, two-handed
Main-gauche	10 gp	1d4 piercing	1 lb.	Defensive (1), disarming, finesse, light
Mattock	10 gp	1d8 slashing	7 lb.	Heavy, two-handed, unbalancing
Nunchaku	5 gp	1d4 bludgeoning	2 lb.	Disarming, finesse
Orc double battleaxe	25 gp	1d8 slashing/1d8 slashing	5 lb.	Double, versatile (both ends)
Poleaxe	25 gp	1d12 slashing	7 lb.	Armor penetration (1), awkward (2), heavy, reach, two-handed, unbalancing
Sai	2 gp	1d4 bludgeoning	2 lb.	Defensive (1), disarming, finesse, light
Spiked chain	30 gp	1d6 piercing	5 lb	Awkward (2), double, entangling, finesse, heavy, tripping, wrap-around
Ranseur	20 gp	1d8 piercing	6 lb.	Heavy, disarming, reach, readied, two-handed

Martial Ranged Weapons

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Composite shortbow	80 gp	1d6 piercing	3 lb.	Ammunition (range 100/400), armor penetration (1), two-handed
Repeating crossbow	100 gp	1d8 piercing	8 lb.	Ammunition (range 80/320), awkward (2), loading (after 6 shots), two-handed