Bullet Points
A New Beginning
By Owen K.C. Stephens

Welcome to the latest installment of *Bullet Points.* I'm Owen K.C. Stephens, writer of a lot of **Star Wars Roleplaying Game** material and a few **d20 Modern** products that haven't been announced yet. It's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky rules issues, and give you a little peek into the design philosophy of the game.

Every two weeks I pick an issue that's provoked a lot of questions or comments, begin with a general discussion of the topic where applicable, and then answer specific questions related to it. If there are any unrelated but pressing questions in the mailbox, I might tackle them at the end of the column, but only if I have room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

A New Beginning

Since this is my first column, I'm going to jump right into miscellaneous questions that have been submitted.

Questions and Answers

The questions for this installment cover combat, general topics, and the **Urban Arcana** *Campaign Setting.*

Combat Questions

Can Burst Fire and Double Tap be used at the same time? My intuition tells me no, but I thought I'd ask to be sure.

Your intuition is right. A character can't use both feats for the same attack because according to the descriptions of the two feats, Burst Fire works only with automatic weapons, and Double Tap works only with semiautomatic weapons. More specifically, both feats work for weapons with the indicated rates of fire. A Beretta 93R has both rates of fire, but it can use only one at a time.

If my hero lands a critical hit while using Skip Shot with a gun that deals 2d6 points of damage, how much damage does he deal? Since you don't multiply extra dice on a critical hit (say, from Double Tap), I'd guess that you shouldn't multiply "penalty dice" either, even though you *would* multiply a straight numerical penalty. So a critical hit with Skip Shot should deal (2d6 x 2) - (1d6), for 3d6 points of damage, right?

You're right. Account for the reduced die of damage from Skip Shot after all other calculations, including the damage multiplier for a critical hit.

Can a character with the Gunslinger advanced class combine Rapid Shot with the lightning shot class feature when making a full attack?

Rapid Shot doesn't exist as a feat in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game;* it's been replaced by feats such as Burst Fire and Double Tap. However, if you decide to add it to your game, its effects certainly ought to stack with those of lightning shot. Otherwise, you'd be giving one of the most useful abilities of the Gunslinger to anyone with a couple of feat slots to spare.

When using both the feat and the class feature, the Gunslinger would gain two additional attacks at his full attack bonus. A -4 penalty applies to each of those attacks as well as all others made during the round. Thus, a Gunslinger whose attacks for the round are at +10/+5 could use a full-round action to make four attacks at +6/+6/+6/+1.

The GM of our d20 Modern campaign claims that using Burst Fire requires a full-round action, and that the rules don't say that it is a standard action unless it fails. I was hoping to get confirmation that it takes a standard attack action at all times.

Your GM is always correct -- that's one of the perks of being a GM. In this case, however, your GM seems to have changed the rules for Burst Fire (also his prerogative). Burst Fire is normally used with a single attack (as described on page 81 of the **d20 Modern**Roleplaying Game). As such, using it requires only an attack action.

As a point of terminology, **d20 Modern** doesn't have standard actions; it has only attack actions, move actions, full-round actions, and free actions. While an attack action in **d20 Modern** is essentially the same as **D&D**'s standard action, mixing terminologies between the two games can cause confusion.

General Questions

When a character attains a new level, do the new action points gained stack with any remaining from her prior level?

Yes. A hero keeps any unused action points and adds new ones to them.

Can you change the feats a character has? For instance, suppose a player chooses a feat for a starting character but later realizes that he would rather have a different one. Do any game rules allow for such a change?

No, except for the general rule that a GM can allow anything she wants. In general, a player should consider his feat selection very carefully because it cannot be changed, and enforcing this rule is not at all unreasonable. But there's also nothing wrong with a GM rescinding that rule if one choice doesn't work out the way the player would have liked. Such a change may be appropriate if the player is unfamiliar with the game or with a new setting, or if he requests the change no more than one game session after making his original choice.

What happens to a Tough hero's Constitution-based talents (energy resistance, second wind, and the like) if he's bitten by a vampire and loses his Constitution score?

A newly minted undead creature that retains special qualities based on its Constitution modifier uses its Charisma modifier for them instead. Therefore, a Tough hero vampire with second wind can take a standard

action to spend 1 action point and recover a number of hit points equal to his Charisma modifier. But since energy resistances don't stack, the vampire's greater resistances completely supercede those of the Tough hero.

How would you figure out the purchase DCs for items that are worth more than $12,000,000 (DC 50)? For example, how would you work out the purchase DC for a supercomputer ($60,000,000)?

An item's purchase DC increases by +8 each time the cost increases by a factor of 10, assuming the original purchase DC was higher than 2. For example, a purchase DC of 21 equates to $2,750, while a purchase DC of 29 is $27,500.

Thus, to find the purchase DC for an item with a cost greater than $12,000,000 (DC 50), keep dividing the cost by 10 until it falls between $1,500,000 and $12,000,000. Then take the purchase DC for that reduced cost and add 8 for each time you divided by 10.

For example, let's look at your $60,000,000 supercomputer (which had better come with a nice game or two). Dividing the cost by 10 once gives you $6,000,000, which equates to DC 48. Since you divided the cost only once, add 8 to that base DC, for a final purchase DC of 56.

If you want to know the purchase DC of a typical nuclear aircraft carrier (around $5 billion) divide by 10 three times, for a result of $5,000,000 (purchase DC 47). Since you made three divisions, you would add 24 to the base DC of 47, for a total purchase DC of 71.

Urban Arcana Questions

How old would a half-dragon need to be if he were the age-equivalent of a 23-year-old human?

The *d20 Modern* Roleplaying Game defines age in six categories: child, young adult, adult, middle age, old, and venerable. A half-dragon should logically age at a rate halfway between that of its dragon parent and its human parent. The **d20 Modern** game has no rules for how fast dragons age, but we can borrow some from **D&D.**

At the age of 23, a human is almost a third of the way into the adult age category. So all we need to do is figure out the boundaries of the adult age category for a half-dragon and place him about a third of the way through it.

To make life simpler, I've compressed childhood for half-dragons, so that they become young adults faster than a pure average would suggest. (Essentially, the slower aging of the dragon blood doesn't kick in until the character reaches puberty.) That supposition gives us the following age ranges for half-dragons.

Age Category	Age in Years
Child	1-14
Young Adult	15-30
Adult	31-69
Middle Age	70-129
Old	130-329
Venerable	330+

Thus to be the equivalent of a 23-year-old human adult, a half-dragon should be about 43 years old.

The *Bullet Points* column from March 30th says that gnolls are LA +1, but the one from August says they're +2. Which is it? I apologize for bringing up this issue yet again, but we have four contradictory sources (two for +2 and two for +1, or three if you count the lineup picture).

The answer is simple -- in games Charles Ryan is running they're LA +1, but in James Wyatt's campaigns they're LA +2.

Seriously, two principles are at work here. First, information in running text supercedes information from tables or art, though the latter issue rarely comes up. Secondly, the most recent ruling (in this case the August 10th installment of *Bullet Points*) overrules previous rulings.

By virtue of that latter principle, I'm going to use this column to overrule the August 10th installment of *Bullet Points* and placegnolls back at LA +1. Although they are a powerful race at that level adjustment, they're no worse than half-ogres (also +2 Hit Dice and LA +1). In fact, **Urban Arcana** seems to assume that a race can have a level adjustment one lower than its bonus Hit Dice. For example, bugbears have +3 HD and a +2 level adjustment, while ogres have +4 HD and a +3 level adjustment).

So the last word, for the moment, is that gnolls are LA +1.

Do you have a rules question about the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game? Send it to bulletpoints@wizards.com. For the quickest possible answer, please put the topic of your question in the subject line and keep the question as succinct as possible. If you have more than one question, feel free to send two or more emails -- but for best results please include only one question per email unless your questions are very closely related to one another. Please don't expect a direct answer by email. Check back here every other week for the latest batch of answers!

About the Author

Owen Kirker Clifford Stephens was born in 1970 in Norman, Oklahoma. He attended the TSR Writer's Workshop held at the Wizards of the Coast Game Center in 1997 and moved to the Seattle area in 2000, after accepting a job as a Game Designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Fourteen months later, he returned to Oklahoma with his wife and three cats to pick up his freelance writer/developer career. He has author and co-author credits on numerous **Star Wars** and *EverQuest* projects, as well as *Bastards and Bloodlines* from Green Ronin. He also has producer credits for various IDA products, including the Stand-Ins printable figures.