Optional Rule: Simplified Damage

Introduced here is an optional rule to streamline and expedite combat resolution in D&D 5e. Simplified Damage combines attack (or a saving throw) rolls and damage into a single d20 roll.

Attacks & Saving Throws

When a creature makes a successful attack, it deals harm. If a creature succeeds on an attack roll by 10 or more, they deal powerful harm instead. If the creature's attack was a critical, they deal critical harm instead.

When a creature fails a saving throw, it takes harm from the spell, attack, or effect. If the creature fails a saving throw by 10 or more, or rolls a natural 1, the creature takes powerful harm instead.

Harm

Harm, powerful harm, and critical harm are categories of damage whose values differ based on the attack or spell. To determine the harm, powerful harm, and critical harm values of each attack or spell, reference the harm by damage die chart below.

For example, an attack with a rapier has a damage die of d8 which gives it a harm of 4, a powerful harm of 8, and a critical harm of 12. The attacker's relevant ability score modifier, in this case Strength or Dexterity, is then added to each value. Whenever that attacker deals damage with a rapier he deals those amounts of damage.

If an attack or spell would call for multiple damage dice to be rolled, multiply the harm, powerful harm, and critical harm values by the number of dice called for.

How Does This Help?

When using this optional rule for Simplified Damage, it is best if all players determine the harm, powerful harm, and critical harm values of their weapon attacks and spells ahead of time. The intention of this optional rule is to speed up combat which it isn't likely to do if players are referencing a chart after every time an attack or saving throw is rolled at the table!

Harm By Damage Die

Damage Die	Harm	Powerful Harm	Critical Harm
d4	2	4	6
d6	3	6	9
d8	4	8	12
d10	5	10	15
d12	6	12	18
d20	10	20	30

Half-Measure

Some players will miss the visceral experience of rolling damage when they score a sneak attack or cast a spell. For these players, consider using the simplified damage rules for weapon attacks and cantrips and roll damage as normal for spells 1st level and above and any additional damage that might come from a class feature or racial trait.