



Bullet Points

Crossing the Streams

By James Wyatt

Welcome to the latest installment of *Bullet Points*. I'm James Wyatt, designer of a lot of **D&D** books, plus one **d20 Modern** book that's coming out in 2005, though I can't tell you about that one just yet. It's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky issues, and give you a little peek into the minds of the designers (insofar as I can pry their minds open to wrest insight from them).

Every two weeks I'll 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 there's room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

Crossing the Streams

This article will be the last one in which I try to ease my transition into answering **d20 Modern** questions by pretending they're **D&D** questions. Next time, I'll plunge into the finer details of the Wealth system, which clearly has nothing at all to do with **D&D**. This time, however, the topic is crossing the streams -- that is, what happens when **d20 Modern** meets **D&D**.

Questions and Answers

We'll start off with a question about . . . the Wealth system!

 **Given that the value of a gold piece is about \$5.00 US, how many gp is a Wealth point worth? I want to know because I'm going to put my D&D characters through a modern adventure.**


That's a loaded question. First of all, there's no simple formula for converting gold pieces to dollars. If you're comparing their purchasing power in their respective worlds, the answer would depend on what you look at. A day's worth of good meals in **D&D** costs 2 gp. If I ate out three times a day, I would probably spend about \$40. If my **d20 Modern** character eats a fast-food breakfast, a family-style lunch, and an upscale dinner, he must make three Wealth checks, with DCs of 2, 4, and 7, respectively. Table 7-1 tells us those are equivalent to \$5 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$55 for dinner, or \$80 for the whole day's food. So is a gp worth \$5, \$20, or \$40? Who knows?

But you asked the question because you're planning an adventure in which a group of **D&D** characters venture into the modern world. Does that mean they have to bring their gold pieces to a jeweler or pawnshop and try to get modern cash for them? Are you trying to figure out what kind of Wealth bonus your **D&D** characters should have in order to buy modern stuff on this adventure?


The answers depend on what you have in mind for the adventure. If you want the characters to lose their medieval trappings and "go native," gearing up with firearms and such, then just assume that each has a wealth bonus appropriate for her character level according to Table 7-2: Wealth Bonus by Level in the **d20**

Modern Roleplaying Game. But if you want them to keep a lot of their existing gear -- much of which could still be useful in the modern world -- feel free to reduce the Wealth bonus they start off with, based on the idea that they only need to buy a few essentials in order to fit in better.

If you want the characters to feel as though they have to scrounge for cash, then give them each a very low Wealth bonus based on having to hock their stores of gold. Remember, the Wealth system isn't based on a cash economy the way the money system in the **D&D** game is. A hero's Wealth bonus doesn't represent the cash he has on hand; it has more to do with his bank account and credit -- neither of which your **D&D** characters will have. If they're limited to what they can get for their gold at a pawnshop, each might start with a Wealth bonus as low as +2.

 **My GM is transferring his world from the Dungeons & Dragons game v.3.5 into the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*. To make this change easier, he wants each character to take talents as bonus feats in the equivalent Urban Arcana class. I'm running a bard who's going to become a Charismatic Hero, and I was wondering if he could use his bardic music ability to inspire courage with the Charismatic Hero's coordinate talent. If so, could he use them while simultaneously using, say, a Perform (oratory) skill?**

Sure, he should be able to use them together. They are different abilities, though, in terms of their origins if not so much their effects. But the order in which he uses them is important, and he can't use them simultaneously. He would have to use coordinate first and spend a full-round action directing his allies' actions, granting each of them a bonus for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier. Once that bonus is in place, your hero doesn't have to do anything else to maintain it. On the next round, he can use his bardic music ability by taking an attack action (a standard action in **D&D**) to activate it. The bonus from that ability lasts for as long as your hero continues to sing (using an attack action each round) and for 5 rounds thereafter. Remember, though, that bardic music is a supernatural ability, not just an inspiring speech.

 **Can I use the *Planar Handbook*, *Manual of the Planes*, and *Deities & Demigods* in an Urban Arcana campaign?**

Knock yourself out. There's no reason you can't incorporate the planar cosmology and even the gods from the **D&D** game into an **Urban Arcana** campaign. In fact, *Manual of the Planes* explains that the Plane of Shadow is rumored to connect different alternate Material Planes. One of these could be the Material Plane that holds the world of **Urban Arcana**, and another could be the Material Plane where all the shadowkind originated. You could even build a group of planeswalkers who have been exploring planar magic in an attempt to discover the place beyond Shadow where all the magic in the world originated.

Deities and Demigods is also a great resource for any campaign that incorporates real-world mythology. An adventure in which minions of Set are chasing the PCs while they try to rescue a valkyrie held captive in the plane of Hades would be a bit mind-blowing, but I bet it would be fun!

 **I was wondering about epic-level progressions for the classes and advanced classes in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.**

At this point, the **d20 Modern** game system doesn't include epic-level heroes and adventures, but there's no good reason you couldn't use the rules in the **D&DEpic Level Handbook** to extrapolate rules for them. Epic progressions for basic classes would be pretty straightforward -- your hero could just keep going until

she had all the talents her class had to offer. Advanced classes are trickier, and I'd be a little worried that they might all end up looking a lot like the epic fighter, with bonus feats at every other level and no other abilities.

I would definitely enforce a rule that a hero couldn't attain 11th level in any class until her 21st character level. Furthermore, in keeping with the spirit of the **d20 Modern** rules, you might want to rule that no class has an epic progression -- a hero just has to keep multiclassing into new classes as she advances beyond 20th level. You'd definitely want to create epic prestige classes to keep that system from getting old too fast, though.

Do the rules in *Savage Species* apply to the d20 Modern game?

They can if you want them to -- or more precisely, if the GM says they do. If you as GM want to let your players play **D&D** monsters in your modern campaign, the rules in *Savage Species* are a fine path to that goal. You'll want to consider carefully what monsters to allow, though. Start with only the ones in the **d20 Modern** rulebook, the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*, and the *Menace Manual*, because introducing magic-heavy monsters such as nagas or celestials into a modern campaign could really throw it out of whack. There are plenty of other rules in *Savage Species* that you should be able to use with little or no modification, such as templates, many feats, and certain mundane items of equipment. Furthermore, the rules for becoming a monster in Chapter 11 of *Savage Species* could make a really interesting addition to a **d20 Modern** game -- particularly as a process the heroes must try to prevent.

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

James Wyatt is an RPG designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His design credits include *The Speaker in Dreams*, *Defenders of the Faith*, *Oriental Adventures*, *Deities and Demigods*, *Fiend Folio*, *Draconomicon*, and the *Book of Exalted Deeds*. He wrote the Origins award-winning adventure *City of the Spider Queen* and is one of the designers of the new Eberron campaign setting, which is due out in June 2004. James lives in Kent, Washington with his wife Amy and son Carter.
